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FOREWORD

THIS book, apart from a few pages in which an attempt is made to deal with some recent mighty events, stays as prepared for publication on the eve of the Great European War.

Under the titles, "Hindustan," "1805," "The *Titanic*," three small portions have appeared in the *Empire Review*, by the courtesy of whose Editor they are reprinted.

C. F. C.

London, March 1915.

ERRATA

Page 60, line 23, *for* "on river," *read* "on the river."
Page 156, line 18, *for* "case," *read* "cast."
Page 240, line 19, *for* "their best," *read* "the best."

PART I

THE DAWN

ZEAL

Of eager soul, some, asking what is man,
His former progress, primal life review,
Researches, here or there, austere pursue,
By toil the breadth of verity must fan.
So lovingly, nor leaving 'neath the ban
Aught the reply will help, with strength imbue,
They mould our knowledge, give it juster hue,
More sagely build, o'er previous error span.
Thus looms, at last, a story, argument
Awaking countless visions, strangest dreams!
If oft by words which purpose represent
Is checked the wayward drift of poets' schemes,
Who that the cult of evolution willed
Has awe escaped and not been wonder thrilled?

THE DAWN

MAN's origin I sing, and early conflict dire,
Effort in many lands, ascent and high desire:
Dare hope a theme may prove auspicious that enthralls,
Asks wisdom, strength, O Muse! and for thy favour calls!

I

Surrounding loveliness bewilders, haunts the eyes,
Causes the heart to throb ever with glad surprise,
So that though cares oppress, or suffering pierce man through,
When he is whole and free, the scene enchants anew.
Yet dainty flowers or cornfields ere the grain is won,
Fair forests, snowy peaks, blue ocean, gorgeous Sun,
All are surpassed by him who at a later day,
Through thought and energy, should reach a fuller sway.
But even now each mind is surely occupied
With its exacting problems, cannot set aside
Hope of some victory; or would diminish woes,
Or daunt the obstacles advancement which oppose.
For secrets marvellous within a brain are hid
That vigorous can toil, inferior ways forbid,
Now, hungers to discover a sublime ideal,
Now would establish truth and mightiness reveal.

How came this curved expanse life's wonders to support?
Almost Earth seems to-day some questioning to court,
That patiently has watched the tedious steady tide
Of creatures who prepared a path for human pride.
Still, would it rashness show to deal with topics vast,
Direct a curious gaze on a stupendous past?
In such a project failure cannot well degrade,
So by the test itself, the doubt shall be allayed;
Truly, grave ventures which the rhythmist should affright,
Shall serve him as a loadstar, bring him pure delight
The while, irregular, he humankind surveys,
A flying chronicler, notes different acts and ways;
Boldly hope nourishes, he may an inkling give
How here and there a few, say now or then, did live.
When to their heritage succeeded men as lords?
Inquiry diligent shows Earth herself records
A tale of ancient time; e'en revelations strange
Of late have come within our mental vision's range;
Thus overpoweringly, a riddle long obscure
With each discovery continues to allure.
Lo, man's arrival here will stay a startling theme,
Must ever rest for him commanding and supreme;
But, if his progress sure is wondrous to recall,
That such a being weak, whose fate it was to fall
From, as it were, the clouds, should after countless years
Aspire to prove his birth, regardless of the fears
And doubts of timid ones who shrink from modern truth,
Is evidence fore'er he quits the path of youth.

Whence sprang the views of Cosmos modern minds
accept?
How came it confidence into men's bosoms leapt?
Conscious that Pisa's son of an heroic mould,
To a hushed throng, how Earth pursues her course,
had told;
And Newton wise made clear, through universal law
Particles, great and small, nigh to each other draw;
Kant dared a theory new, magnificent propound,
Urging his nebular hypothesis profound.
Laplace thereto, computing tirelessly agrees;
While Herschel evidence in starry heavens sees;
And eager Adams through such knowledge opportune
Now Neptune finds in space, obtains his triumph
soon.
The chemist with the skilled astronomer then moves,
Earth's kinship with the sun, by spectroscope fresh
proves;
Not only in the Sun; in comet as in star,
Terrestrial elements exist both wide and far!
So wisdom is convinced, nor longer hesitates;
Acknowledges Kant's thesis truth communicates.

II

While slumbered mighty time in an obscurest age,
Whose distance inexact no wizard e'er could gauge,
Whirled at appalling speed, a nebula most bright
And tenuous; so huge, despite their rapid flight
Its further beams in view scarce yesterday arrived.
This rushing universe, so came it, was deprived
Of portions vast (unto the whole as drops of rain
Are to a sea) which form a loose majestic train

Of giant stars; still follow wide abysmal ways.
Star-like our sun contracts: while from his disc there strays
Brave Earth, to join a band wheeling around their sire,
That fiery molten globe which doth his brood inspire
With motion rotary. As Earth's hot surface cools,
Arise about her soon great oceans, lakes and pools;
That come from vapours dense, essential are for life.
Now in the Universe each particle is rife
With hidden motion swift perchance inherited
From the vast primal cloud, whence earliest all sped,
Thus is an energy electrical retained
In atoms passing small, the which are closely chained;
Know an attraction, strange and secret, each to each;
Or stay as much repelled.
Lo! on a favoured beach,
Haply first sought and won an atom bold his bride.
And then by unions such, repeated side by side,
Through changes chemical and physical within,
The viscid jelly-mass a wondrous life could win.
A sudden gaining might schemes vital to ensue,
Though in an hour unknown and 'neath conditions new,
Matter showed more unrest, in epochs strange of yore,
Than, as is possible, it e'er had known before.
The small pellucid cell, with subtle puissance clad,
Increased and broke in twain; when either part could add
Fine substance pleasing it, and separate in turn.
Next, as long periods pass, ambitious atoms learn,
Leaguing with one another, common cause to make:
Casting about for triumphs, tasks brave undertake.
The organism can own a special foot and arm,
And now, a mouth for prey; exert an evil charm;

So years in multitudes unheeding hurry by
While creatures small persist, whom man's unaided eye
Had failed to scan, although a lens had shown them fit
To play a doughty part, willing themselves to pit
With utmost of their force 'gainst rivals seeking food;
Or bow in case of need to Nature's changing mood.
But swifter, stronger than his clan, here one excels
His fellows all; and since in young there ever dwells
A likeness well pronounced to those from whom they spring,
Some special types improve; to offspring features cling
That made the parents victors. So, there now endured
New forms, endowed with traits which contest had secured.
Dividing cells in time, stay side by side, cohere;
And, when such various groups in creatures small appear,
They different tissues form, fresh duties can achieve;
Produce a pregnant change and ever more would weave:—
Here cells become the elements of blood; there, nerves;
This structure muscle is, for sight that tissue serves;
While, with collective force, cells into being start,
On reproduction look as their especial part.

III

A million years perchance, or more or less, the birth
Of life the highest was in ocean, not on earth.
And when besides a body, head and tail loomed clear,
Behold a worm-like fish, entered on its career,

While rose in time the fins from little organs massed
Such as have ceaseless food-streams gently onward passed;
Or from integument, which, at a period old,
Became endowed with muscle in a tiny fold.
Too, came in view a spine, giving with ribs and skull
A needed framework hard to strengthen fishes dull.
Lo, swimmers oft improve, soon as the age is ripe,
In skill and shape and size. And next some change their type;
Since fishes must acquire the art of breathing air,
So their descendants next, in part, the seas forswear:
From paddle unto foot, advance is seen, to-day,
When lizards green a life in embryo display.
The fins, as certain fish to drier spots resort,
Vanish, though bones endure in line of chief support:
And slowly are developed even leg and arm,
On principle, that what is useless, working harm,
Must disappear, the while essential parts remain
And through continuous use to higher power attain.
As e'er the well equipped tend to surpass the ill,
And the survivors' traits in offspring seek their will;
Surely limbs primitive acquire what puissance lends,
In time become divided at their further ends.
And doubtless so were born, though late, the foot and hand;
But who schemes natural desires to understand,
Scanning a tortoise small, can to a point see draw
Upon the limbs the scales ere last they form a claw.
Nature stirs cautiously; is prudent and makes use
Of that in ages past she minded to produce.

Creatures now crawled or swam at will. 'Tis fact profound,
A toad might evolution's mysteries expound;
Is first endowed with gills, breathes later through his lungs;
Shows how was gained another of the ladder's rungs
Leading to man!
Next, saurians came and with them fear;
No venomed things still creep, nor cruel beasts appear
Horrible as did reptiles, strange and weird of mien,
Then ruling Earth: huge monsters situate between
Our alligators, pythons, vampire-bats, and birds,
Such types of sinister ferocity as words
Can scarce depict, through years a million held their sway
O'er abject smaller beasts; roamed jungles vast for prey.
The lime and sandstone crags display their fossil bones;
And science loves the story, none of it disowns.

IV

Since matter first had learnt how vital force was bred,
Impetuously for life's continuance it pled,
Nor lightly could forego such marvel brought to view
Whose loss would anxious search necessitate anew.
Thus ardour was the cause, while dulness reigned around,
Why living things advanced or rare surrendered ground,
Met varying circumstance safely with measures bold,
Ever capacity adaptive could unfold.
But how had been sustained life's long unending stride?
By traits that even now in matter fast abide.

Surpassing sensitive to sources whence they spring,
The germs' sure records old with might astounding ring.
Wonder of wonders is't, a reproductive cell,
As in an acorn hid, an oak can clear foretell:
Within a chain forge links through a transcendent power
Such as was manifest at life's first fruitful hour!
But ponder how a magnet propagates its ways,
When, over iron passed, it subtle might conveys!
So matter's particles, electrical of scheme,
On a consummate plan must nourish life supreme.
Marvellous are the atoms, that in secret mood
Excite and baffle man, can re-enact or good
Or ill experience! True ecstasy awaits
The student of their force and all thereto relates!
For of the energy wrapt in the atom's whirl,
A portion can itself 'gainst other atoms hurl;
Exhibit subtleties to lure, amaze the wise
And win for sentient beings, in life, the highest prize.

V

Earth's crust reveals a chain; yet, links have vanished oft
For ne'er the callous rocks have saved a relic soft.
How surely is the change in outer form well shown
In many shell-fish small, on aqueous stones have grown
Through epochs strangely vast! Some wear a covering hard
Such as they wore long since; others old shapes discard

And newer ones assume, as in a fairy race
Seen in deep ocean's ooze, wherein 'tis light to trace
Successions numberless!
Though widely now abound
Pigeons of many sorts, they spring from common ground
And one variety. Would fanciers change the breed?
However great their task, they step by step succeed.
A single toe is found in horses yet alive;
That one was two, e'en three, e'en four, nay, earliest five.
Nature preferred the types that best escaped their foes,
To slender limbs inclined and ever fewer toes;
Which equine ancestors, traversing ages vast,
Distanced the earlier forms; to swiftness came at last!
Doubtless of old, false start and vain experiment,
Time without end, were made by Nature diligent.
Maybe a platypus beside an Austral stream,
First, nourishing its young, a virtue showed supreme;
Which semi-saurian's maternal kindliness
Unto its offspring weak, could yet bring more success,
Prepare the way for man. No more did foremost life
Appear beneath a shell; sure guarded from all strife
By parents' constant care, advanced the best at last,
Since beings could, ere birth, recall, excel the past.
'Tis law, all higher beings in their earliest days,
Shall pass successively through many a lowly phase;
So may be seen in man, however he shall wish,
Amphibian signs and e'en the stage as of a fish;
Salmon and newt and python, man, but one form show
At moments primal and before the light they know:
Awhile, the human creature, lion, e'en the hare
Are much each other like, ere yet they breathe the air.

Rose not the lord of Earth but slowly through the age,
Repeating ere his birth full many an ancient stage,
Tardily altering to, in time, a creature proud,
Disdainful of all else that cannot speak aloud?

VI

Often are found remains in world-strewn rocky graves
Of beasts, as epochs sped, engulfed by flood and waves,
Which intermediate forms supply a frequent link
'Twixt creatures lowliest and such as clear can think.
Lo, fossils in the rocks of many ages prove,
As soon as dragons passed, new types of life could move!

Arose from creeping beasts those lighter things of air
Which utter melodies to make the earth more fair;
Roamed brutes of novel sort, days safer, happier spent,
Yet ever slowly changed to suit environment,
Till clad in fur, at last, they knew a progress forced,
Helped by the warmer blood that in their tissues coursed.

At last it came about, on the round Earth did live
A small-brained simple mole or shrew-mouse primitive;
And moved apart from such an insect-eating beast
Other forms various, which ever sure increased:
Thus one developed hoofs, like those of a dull ox;
Another flesh devoured, as doth the crafty fox;
One learnt to gnaw its food, resembled so the rat;
And one was finger-webbed, as is the longed-winged bat.

High in a leafy home, sheltered from foes and storm
The flying lemurs dwelt, distinct in ways and form;
To whom it late arrived, oblivious how to fly,
By a continuous change, of apes weird by and by

To loom the sires; besides, of ancestors of man,
Who, after time immense, on solid earth began
To move with prouder step, and hold himself erect,
And shrewdly look around, important facts connect;
And being larger-brained, could overcome his foes,
Surer than any ape, strike cogent, crafty blows.

VII

Whatever be its stage, intelligence depends
On the high qualities cerebral tissue lends,
And mental puissance soars as convoluted folds
Of matter grey increase, the cranium treasure holds.
Since walked the Java man, new found, of ape-like gait,
A bolder step hath given the hand a free estate:
So fingers were released to minister to mind,
And men have proved themselves to many things inclined.
In old Neanderthal, man showed a sloping brow;
But we to intellect in spacious domes can bow.
Unskilled to count past three (as travellers describe),
With never a name for God, stays many a savage tribe,
Possessing brains which seem more like to those of apes
Than to the highest man's. Sure then the doctrine shapes,
That, in dark forests wild, the ape and lowest man,
Not far apart removed, competitors once ran.
Narrowly apes, renowned for imitative skill,
Lost then a fleeting chance high fortune to fulfil;

Whose cleverest kind will not to-day arouse man's fears,
Since they were clear surpassed in course of distant years
When union premature their skull bones overtook,
And left them coarse or savage, droll, hirsute of look.
Now as an organ waxes, put to frequent use,
So it atrophic grows, that stays without excuse.
Scarcely man pricks his ears to learn where peril lies,
Wherefore his aural muscles loom minute of size;
So, a small inner eyelid stays a relic strange
Showing how gently Nature would the past derange.
Speaks an appendix often troublesome of mood,
Of plain progenitors, an epoch primal, rude.
Descartes revealed a speck within the brain as soul
But knew not certain beasts, as eye, once had it whole:
Long, organs void of use, ghosts of a tedious past,
Cry Nature great is slow, tenacious to the last!
Such rudiments, surviving evolution's fray,
Relate mischances and adventures by the way,
For ages sped of life in sea, and swamp, and wood,
Ere coming on the scene, erect, man wondering stood;
The sport of changeless laws which modify his frame,
Their power in marvels of the Universe proclaim.
And secrets, like to man's exist of lives more still,
Near by, and surely called beneath the potent will
Of one his origin had guessed not, yet oft sought
To mould the shape of flowers and plants and trees by thought.
Our gardeners claim the honour of a luscious pear
Of which no ancient Roman orchards grew aware;

Nor could the Virgin Queen in pleasaunce bright espy
Double chrysanthemums alluring to the eye.
Thus e'en if Nature lavished beauty on mankind,
Dissatisfied our race dared newer joys to find,
To cause fresh living forms, used laws but dimly known,
Which further to explore they now a wish have shown.
Nothing can swim or climb or fly or walk or crawl
But is the slave of rules pertaining e'en to all;
As deem anatomists who view the general plan,
And know that animals in much resemble man:
Even the higher ape, repulsive, rude and quaint,
Doth seem, because of human qualities, attaint.
The simian's frame consists, like man's, of ten score bones;
Ay, man august has little he exclusive owns,
Who with the brutes lust, cunning, cruel ways still shares,
Prudence and energy, love and parental cares.
Exhibiting the sum of every varied trait,
Oft a recurrent sign of what the beasts display,
Bearing the certain mark of ancient stages past,
He an epitome, proclaims an epoch vast!

VIII

Higher indeed than brutes, immeasurably man rose,
But of his victory, 'tis proper to disclose:—
Some moral sense hath taught (as scarcely doubts exist),
Many a living thing for others' good to list.
Parents deem offspring first as of themselves a part,
To others next extend some sympathy and heart;

So when the heritage of love is handed down,
And less the custom binds on all around to frown,
Nature recognisant commands to win the race,
Such as have union known and shown their fellows grace.
Stirred by a social sense, widely the beasts combine,
Assist each other by a subtle warning sign.
Marauding apes obey a leader whom they choose,
Nor to sustain the weak, their heroes can refuse.
To meet another's need an ant will active roam,
Ay, will support a guest in comfort in the home.
The loveless worker-bee guards and attends the young,
Visits on drones stern justice when their knell is rung.
Even a spider shows a form of tenderness;
Nature can war, and yet is not all merciless,
Often appears alert to safeguard and protect,
With curious resource, the favoured would select,
As shows the leaf-veined, leaf-shaped, leaf-hued butterfly
Whose semblance baffles as its enemy draws nigh!

IX

Was struggling man to stay as low as things that crawl,
Ever unhappy under aspects that appal?
The brooding abject savage, starting at each sound,
Expecting a foul spell to hurl him to the ground,
Ever disposed to vice, scarce knowing right from wrong,
By thought and purer morals last was borne along
Clear of worst wretchedness; him patiently time drew
Onward with special care to higher state and new.

At evolution's creed, objectors deal no blow,
Who claim life artificial now makes progress slow ;
Forget they Earth's hot crust knew not the apathy
Of this our later hour, since force was then set free
Nascent, nigh infinite. And shall in future days
A wizard on albumen vitalized rapt gaze ?
Sudden spontaneous movement, see with starting eyes ?
Radium, the wonderful, arrives a timely prize,
Many a seeker's mind with ardour fresh inflames,
And of discoveries the likelihood proclaims.
So marvels hid will stay to whet the interest keen
Of such as dare 'mongst things singular intervene :
And who is not concerned with progress of the race
As influenced by stock which shall the old replace ?
When the air's denizens pipe sweet and tender lays,
With feathers glorious awake an amorous gaze,
It comes about, in part, as falls each lover's choice,
Result the fledgling's strength and colour, form and voice :
So causes sensuous, speeding young Cupid's dart,
In growth of human types have played a weighty part.
But as the vital flame would earliest upward mount,
The germ can more than double narrative recount.
Offspring dissimilar by parents have been reared,
E'en in a sylvan past, ere weddings first appeared ;
The secret cause of which variety to prove
Henceforward will the sage to constant effort move.

x

Truly, when young appear, comes likelihood of change :
And such as are produced, if rise conditions strange,

Thereto must fit themselves or die. See Nature's hand:—
Dislike to alter swift; desire not still to stand!
'Twould seem the scheme of life harmoniously is schooled
In future to endure till either Earth has cooled,
And life slow ebbed; or, sudden monstrous bodies clash,
A comet strikes the globe with catastrophic crash.
From nebula to man! how huge a mystery
In evolution's wave on time's unending sea!
Now is the secret less than e'er it was before
Rude and primeval man is fatherless no more!
As the hill climber breathes of sordid care bereft,
Disdains not to look down upon a scene late left
To satisfy his soul; steadfastly, on must plod
That has, a while ago, a lower surface trod,
So should mankind unmoved regard each meaner height,
Serenely contemplate an ancient path to light!

XI

Dim must remain the age when man appeared on Earth,
Though signs and relics strange assist the gradual birth
Of truth concerning one who struggled, sad and lone,
Pursued an arduous way, 'neath burdens oft must groan.
And as the hour when such, first, traits evinced which we
Glancing around, to-day in savages may see,
Will ne'er be known; so neither can the place be told.
But it would seem our land by glaciers huge of old,

Many score thousand years now past, was visited,
Which stirring, left a mark of where had been their bed,
As, close to mighty Snowdon, granite boulders show.
And later, by the streams, man wandered to and fro,
Doubtless had journeyed far, though if from Afric shore
Or lofty Asian plain escapeth modern lore;
Whose workshops have been found, wherein with method shrewd,
He could form hammers, chisels, picks and borers rude,
With deftness handling flints and hewing flake from flake,
Fashioning axe heads, lance heads, primal weapons make.
Not yet the waters salt, which sharp divide this isle
From the near continent, had trespassed, and awhile
A broader river ran than flows as Thames to-day,
Whose ancient higher shores, or here or there, display
The bones of elephant, rhinoceros and bear,
And weapons wherewith foes to capture and ensnare.
Man fished, or trapped, or bravely hunted in the wood,
Won victories hard o'er prey whose ways he understood;
Solitary or in bands, trod hill and vale and marsh,
Aroused a flame with flints, shouted in accents harsh,
'Scaped from his enemies, the beasts ferocious, wild;
Kept in a wretched lair his trembling wife and child.
Thus in a favoured spot, as where the limestone opes
A sheltered natural door, man fed his gloomy hopes.
So, in Kent's cavern, strangest voices guttural rang
Where stand we and behold a tiger's sabre-fang,
Or certain evidence of human presence gain
Next to the signs of savage beasts' succeeding reign.

XII

Now easier is't to ponder on the beings gaunt
Who, for an epoch long, such refuges could haunt
In Britain's island, or the sign-strewn land of France,
O'ercoming painfully primeval ignorance;
Since yester watched we on a distant Tasman shore,
Rude aboriginals brief destined to restore
By their unaltered customs, habits, rugged ways,
A life whose records here arouse a curious gaze.
We viewed the dark-skinned islanders detach from flint
Thin flakes with which to scrape and rend; learned how by dint
Of skilful patient toil they might a flame inspire,
Twirl pointed wood 'gainst wood, arouse celestial fire;
Who joined, for covering crude, beasts' skins with thread of bark,
And speared the kangaroo, a frequent flying mark.
Ill-used by stronger mates e'er difficult to please,
The women sought oppossums, climbed the loftiest trees;
And save for boughs or bark, coarse shelters from the wind,
The race enjoyed no home; had even failed to find
The way to haft an axe; yet well could plait and weave,
Form baskets small of grasses. Firm did they conceive
Man's shadow is a soul, which, after death, as ghost
Disease-producing, comes to trouble a new host.
Within the dead one's grave they placed his club and spear
And, of his spirit fled, felt an o'erpowering fear:

The mountain side and river bank and forest dense
Swarmed with fell demons full of direst influence.

XIII

Nor far dissimilar were they, in distant while
And ages past, sparse peopled, even this our isle.
For in the hills lime caverns readily reveal
How ancient stonemen lived; 'tis thither searchers steal,
Horn javelins find, and charcoal ash, and flint well shaped
To head a lance. There, needles tell of thresholds draped
With fashioned skins; of vesture rude. Behold, to-day
'Tis ours on implements of cavemen old to stray,
Amazed and wondering note a pristine art adorns
Their stone and ivory, and slate, and reindeer horns!
Figures are seen of fish and wild goats well designed;
A browsing ox stands still, an armed man creeps behind:
Or hairy mammoths march, swift horses onward strain,
Stags captured strew the ground, deer lightly scour the plain!
'Midst life monotonous, millenniums slow passed by,
Saw tediously appear fresh foresight, energy.
But, with man's greater skill, chisels knew edges smooth,
Polished became each weapon, shone as doth a tooth;
And tools more accurate bestow superior power,
With prospect of advance, could valiant efforts dower.
Lastly, this British isle as a land separate
Was girdled by the waves have made the foeman wait,

And Europe loomed at last from Africa divorced,
Climes changed, the musk sheep fled, and lions far were forced.
Now, while the limestone seals traits of an era dim,
Less distant records lie nearer Earth's solid brim:
More, oft the later age abundant witness leaves,
E'en a romantic prehistoric legend weaves.
If rustics in their fields a thunderbolt upturn,
An ancient celt for them a due reward shall earn,
For lovers of man's past view such with fond regard,
Despise not fairies' millstones, elf-shot ne'er discard.
Deep in a tumulus beside a warrior's bones
That lie well guarded by adjacent standing stones,
Crude specimens are found of an erst potter's art,
Show where the cord or thumb has pressed an outer part.
Without some cloven skulls proclaim a sacrifice,
Seemly because attendants grace a paradise:
Slaves had been slain or captives; or the chieftain's wives,
Zealous to please their lord, true-valued not their lives.
Still, when the feast was o'er, no more the dead man's soul
A welcome met from friends; howbeit a rounded hole
Within a resting-place, suggests a favour rare;
Spirits uncurbed so gained an outlet to the air.
How surely, save in earliest, darkest hours, the priest
Has filled, as go-between, high offices that ceased
But late to be supreme! Maintained at every stage,
The medicine-man has found a fetish for his age.
Maybe a custom, cabalistic sign or word
Mysterious comfort brought or to blind worship stirred,

And so men gained relief from many an anxious care;
Who found their souls' affliction more than they could bear:
And few being fit to doubt or reasoning's course pursue,
All bowed to priestcraft's e'er authoritative view:
Hence augurs told the signs; or, round the sacred oak,
White-vestured druids came, must lofty powers invoke.
Still oft a victim's blood hallows the stony shrine,
Nor, tasting such, the clan fails to procure divine
And favouring regard. Nay more, wild man maintains
Descent from brutish ancestry. In Austral plains,
Where often kangaroos are totems unto men,
These sacrifice with solemn rite, and drinking, then,
Grow with the might of strange progenitors imbued;
E'en savages desire a mystic comfort rude!
Each member of the clan attends the ritual feast,
But never the choice part takes of his totem beast,
For he discriminates; both wondrous virtue sees
In union intimate, yet deference decrees!

XIV

O'ercoming Nature stern, man makes but headway slow,
And yet it surely comes he can advances show;
Thus if the male pursue the harsh or dangerous task,
Woman, more gentle, for her fealty can ask
Care and respect of him whose strength and valiant skill
Set her at liberty mild duties to fufil.

In favoured spot and clime, at last man forward leapt,
And step by step became in useful arts adept:
Choosing flax fibres fine, for cloth blent warp and woof,
Desiring vesture, stayed from skins of beasts aloof.
He that would sleep secure from every savage foe,
Oft built such home on piles as looms in Borneo;
But long his fare was plain, as roasted acorns tell,
Whose ancient stores proclaim no pampered fate befell,
Till, in the course of time, domestic beasts were tamed
And oxen got, and sheep, and lands for use reclaimed.
Then furrows split the soil and seed of wheat rough-cast,
As 'neath a spell, bore fruit and mankind rose at last;
Whose refuse in huge mounds on ancient shores betrays
How active creatures lived in prehistoric days,
Who gathered oysters, netted cod, the wild duck snared,
With hounds in eager cry to chase the stag e'en dared.
'Twas after a long stage of apathetic gloom
Had seemed of human kind the changeless certain doom,
The Mother, Nature, deemed her paragon should rise,
Elate with higher power the Universe surprise!
At eve, what hour the usual toil and risk were o'er,
Around the crackling flame, one would anew explore
The mountain or the plain; nay, such as did rejoice
In memory exact and a sonorous voice
With rhythmic rise and fall, recalled some glorious deed,
His listeners' ready minds to other scenes would lead.

He must of courage tell, in hair's breadth 'scapes
delight;
Maybe of passion speak, e'er love a theme of might.
Too, surely came about a more pronounced display
Of feeling and acclaim; men felt toward song their
way;
Learning a motion new, accompanied their chants
With strange inspiriting rude measures of the dance!

XV

Supplied the potter's skill not merely comfort great
But lent art primitive whereon to decorate;
And it arrived that, with a brave uncertain line,
One to a cave-wall steep conveyed a coarse design;
Awkward of touch at first, drew figures of a chief
Or of a spirit dread recounted acts in brief;
Till in a newer phase the king being hailed a god,
On clay or stones were graved the wondrous paths he
trod;
While, under urgent need to mark hope, fear and
thought,
Into the scene, in time, abstract ideas were brought,
Since last, skill graphic with a modest power referred
Unto mind processes: sign writ atoned for word;
Whence wisdom could be learned from what had gone
before;
Because designs became an ever-growing store
Revealing naturally through hieroglyphics' aid,
Or letters thence derived, the progress man had
made;
And furthered civil life through aids to intercourse,
Ay, set at liberty a vast and pregnant force.

And since on walls ornate, man's figure, chiselled clear,
An effigy suggested, sculptures could appear.
More, as with pigments one his body must adorn;
He gave his portraits hues, and painting's art was born!
Surely fine feelings stirred this ancestor remote,
Whom, in an early hour, a sense of beauty smote!

XVI

'Twas epoch pregnant in the history of the world
When first flint-users fiercely copper lance-heads hurled;
And next 'midst glowing pride, a sword of bronze being wrought,
Tenacity and sharpness helped men when they fought.
But wealth of greater kind could scarce their gaze escape,
Supplied to daily tools fresh hardness, varied shape;
Brought implements and weapons to existence swift,
Which could the arts of peace and war still further lift;
Vanished past idleness and apathy profound
As men with lusty thews from out the generous ground
Drew richer iron ore and smelting such became
Lords of the Universe, heirs to progressive fame!

XVII

Exists a subtle essence in all living things,
A power adaptable that hopes for, often brings,
Through practice and inheritance, with steady stride,
Progress, advancement toward a social welfare wide.

Some bees make nuptial flights and some from toil
ne'er pause;
Ants in communities are ruled by rigid laws,
The tropic bower-bird a shelly home renews,
A sister songstress can her beak as needle use.
Shows the sage elephant a wondrous memory,
E'en a long latent wish himself from foes to free;
Quitting a home of logs and out of danger's reach,
Beavers their progeny to swim in rivers teach.
Since such sagacity obtains in humble life,
'Twas likely 'mongst mankind vast effort should grow
rife:
Striving with hand and brain, they swift redeemed the
past,
O'ercame their helplessness 'gainst all around at last.
For ever since he felt the woes of solitude,
And hatched a primal speech from uttered feelings rude
Through imitation's aid; still struggling, feeble man
Would dwell a unit of a tribe, or smaller clan.
Next, settlements grew towns where folk could
wants appease,
Since, with the metals' use, arrived fresh industries;
Supple became the voice and habits suffered change,
Old ways submitted oft to innovations strange;
Inventions slowly coming and discoveries rare
Were fated with the years still finer fruit to bear.
'Tis clear the mind of man with effort hid can work,
Suddenly on occasion, notice truths that lurk
And call for welcome wide! So shall expedients new,
Notions felicitous, with swiftness leap to view;
As when, ere archery, some restless shaft far strayed
And the elastic force of cord and wood betrayed;
Or when a differing note, struck on a comrade's bow,

Spake of a lyre whose range should spread from high
to low.
Oft had stakes cleft the soil e'er was proposed a
plough
And burdened logs been rolled e'er wont would wheels
allow;
Some brooding mind descried a hollow trunk afloat,
Launched a frame bound with skins; and then one
built a boat
With ribs and keel and planks firm fastened to the
side;
So last, the viking could encounter ocean's tide!
Still, far were intervals between inventions small;
Long, gloomy and dark years fell to the lot of all!

XVIII

And how through wretchedness of centuries untold
Did human character its pregnant force unfold?
What principles invested with controlling power
Him that had lately blossomed Nature's special flower?
To lighten hunger, sate the passions each can feel,
Our primal ancestors fierce valour would reveal,
With rivals sternly war. And prudence set the rule,
An effort should be made wild impulses to school
Among the primitive, who loved not moments lone,
E'en like dumb animals, to sympathy were prone.
Successfully they wrought that helped were to
oppose,
Whether engaged 'gainst Nature or fierce human foes;
So homage came to chiefs, respect cheered elders grave,
Sagacious trustfulness a meed of welfare gave.
And early it appeared a meritorious deed,
Eschewing friendliness, scarcely the good to heed,

Save of the special clan. Nay, captives, even wives,
Oft suffered grievous wrong and passed unhappy lives;
While, save amongst the tribe, no binding ties obtained,
Theft and deceit could rule, murder of strangers reigned.
How tedious spread the notion, seldom 'tis unfit,
As toward an honoured guest, kind actions to commit!
Then, paths of gentleness seemed not unworthy praise,
And e'en toward alien groups were followed truer ways.
Too, laws unwritten set the judgment of the wise
Concerning weighty things before the young men's eyes;
And the transgressor found that punishment befel,
To comprehend the gulf 'twixt right and wrong was well;
Each found self-mastery increases happiness,
While apathy and lust as surely bring distress.
So, for the general good, arose morality
Seeking to liberate from hapless anarchy;
Imposing moderation; aiming to ensue
Necessary private justice; loving not the new.
Now subtle agencies of puissance unsurpassed,
Had exercised on men an early influence vast;
For though dumb animals brief guard their offspring young,
Who soon can utilize the gifts around them flung:
Great Nature unto man concedes a further care,
Rules mothers shall for long all selfishness forswear.
Wherefore each human parent for the offspring knows
A fixed and deep affection that oft further flows;

So youths to maids, and such to youths, lay bare the heart,
And a strange gentleness sets motherfolk apart ;
A spirit pure must live of hid insistent love
Growing inherent, and dire egotism above.
Such essence welling over, sure originates,
Through an excess of tender thought accelerates
Still wider sympathy, becomes a primal cause
Of advantageous custom, differing moral laws,
Proclaims persistently, the weak and strong have rights,
And to activity of conscience each invites.
And yet the first display of noble feelings soft
Occurs before the age of man and woman, oft !
A sober duty rules the deeds of tiny ants,
Small bees industrious, sagacious elephants !
An ape for stricken kin awhile will truly grieve,
E'en sacrifice its life a master's to reprieve !
'Twould seem, high traits have sprung e'en from a humble cause,
As benefit evoked the best of moral laws ;
The fires magnanimous which lofty manhood mark
Were kindled through the action of a lowly spark !
Still lenient feelings could but little help afford
While man oft changed his mate, woman renewed her lord ;
And thus a surer bond was due 'twixt man and wife,
To children brought a boon and parents purer life :
Under which glorious compact, virtues of each kind
As from a curb were freed and soared the human mind.
Reason and ethic insight now with purpose true,
Contrived harmoniously advantage to pursue,

Till loomed through mists of doubt at last a maxim
clear;—
Men should to justice, high expediency, adhere.

XIX

Ruled yet credulity, whose absence had been strange
Since folly can continue of unbroken range.
To stab an effigy o'ercomes a mortal foe,
As deems the moujik giving secretly a blow!
Such hour as knighthood travelled on a far crusade,
How oft the figure of the holy cross was made!
So simple peasantry can view without surprise
A miracle prepared before their very eyes.
Thus superstition thrives with understanding small
And wretched savages into worse error fall,
Employing darkest magic, curiously believe
From rival sorcerers like evils they receive!

XX

While as long ages passed and Nature loomed severe,
Ruthless disease, storms, hunger, cold caused horrid
fear;
Scarcely the stone-man could a mind distraught escape
Who shrank from spirits near of dismal, baleful shape,
And saw life everywhere. Animate all things seemed
To one must brood and ponder, ever darkly dreamed
That universal life the pressing mystery solved
Of leaf and blossom, tides, a moon that phased,
revolved.
Who woke each morn, imagined death could scarcely
be;
Had viewed a spirit, oft his own, in sleep set free;
And was it not assured, whoever might be slain
Would as a haunting ghost visit his home again?

Too, none e'er trod the forest but had known a sire,
Could then the weak toward aught more laudably aspire
Than pious reverence to one who, gone before,
Expects, entreats, commands descendants should adore?
Might not some ancestor, most gifted to coerce,
Even have fixed for aye the course of Universe?
As certain it has seemed to every craving mind,
Throughout, our world was by Omnipotence designed.

XXI

How man has magic loved, miracle, mystery!
Aught showing sign of subtle proud transcendency!
Whence in a pristine state, when terms exact were few
And notions fanciful, he the conclusion drew
That human attributes should properly be given
Unto the glorious lights and pageantry of Heaven,
Nay, to the spirit of the corn that needs, each year,
Revival by shed blood of mankind passing near,
And to such spirit as sure ruled in Nemi's grove
Whose priest of old against each would-be rival strove.
Arrived the creed that beings, wielding force untold,
Direct affairs of earth, man's circumstances mould.
Sun's orb beneficent, which ever comfort gave,
Unto the ignorant, alive seemed, quick to save;
Potent, at early spring, to make the world more fair,
Anxious, at glorious noon, to dissipate each care.
Advanced his worshippers, on every side arose;
Surveying him, escaped dejection's saddest throes,
Reflected only he was worthy constant awe
Who proved a mighty blessing and unending law.
Heralded by a star unfaltering, every morn
He leaves a cavern's gloom, 'midst rosy hues is born;

With golden locks, resplendent symbol of his power,
E'er mounts triumphant, surely darkness makes to cower;
Unparalleled proceeds, but meets a tireless fate,
O'ercome by night must yield 'fore everlasting hate.
To suffering given, he dies, rises again supreme;
Mortals inspiriting with a delicious dream,
And aiding those who pined to win a mighty friend
Blest with power to grant life ceaseless, therefore mend
All sorrows upon Earth. Thus, with high soaring thought
Was won a consolation and a guerdon brought.
'Twas held the Sun-god drew nigh scenes of Earthly woe,
Endured the keenest torments that he might bestow
Forgiveness from on high. He had as natal day
That winter's feast which marks his orb's returning sway;
Was debted to the father, Heaven, for his birth
The while acknowledging as mother, virgin Earth.
Timidly, step by step, yet never losing heart,
Man had advanced that once at ghostly shades would start;
In his unhappiness, pining for comfort new,
Spurred on, without a pause, to find religions true,
In Persia far and Egypt bright and Athens gay,
Mirrored perchance, the Sun-god in a mystery-play;
Lo! Mithras, Hercules, Osiris, even Thor,
Radiantly shone on folk of many a different shore!

Unfolds a bold desire, against the course of Sun,
Eastward at first to move, and next o'er countries run
Westward, so pass with him; meanwhile in brief to give
Of certain men and lands a simple narrative.

PHARAOH-LAND

SUCCOUR

Ever distraught, the weak sad ask a sign,
Ne'er recklessly their confidence bestow,
Will worship him that miracles doth show:
Cling to a master, saviour, friend divine.
Revering gracious virtues, they would shrine
His sacred name who, rescuing from woe,
Suffering much ere sinking 'neath a blow,
Lived for the good of such as helpless pine.
Oh, stately dream of might, directing all,
Luring from nought in manner magical,
Letting perhaps, now this, now that be done,
Through epoch weirdest or but scarce begun!
Ne'er mystery huge, the supernatural,
True loomed till force surpassing came from One!

PHARAOH-LAND

I

Surpassing treasure-house of hoary relics strange,
'Twixt Araby, still seas and Libya's torrid range;
Egypt! thy story shows for ever thou wilt gleam
Much as a glorious vision or transcendent dream!
A fertile river's shores set in the desert sand!
Where has been weirder or a more romantic strand?
Through vast obscurity by loneliness enhanced,
In tedious secrecy to primal life advanced;
Already seeming heir to majesty hadst grown
When Menes, the renowned ascended to thy throne;
Formed a society of a consummate cast,
As patient toil makes clear to modern minds at last:
An empire builder strong inspired by lofty hope
To join States separate, with early troubles cope;
Who ruled from Memphis city under azure skies
And palm trees' scanty shade nigh where now Cairo lies.

II

Ne'er fails broad Nile to bring from distant southern lands
Such wealth that active man, employing it, commands
The certainty of ease. So, in a far-off age,
A people civilised had reached a lofty stage,
Enjoyed the benefit of a high sovereign king,
Gave him the dread regard due to a holy thing,
While he, in blest assurance of a future lot,
Never to make secure his burial-place forgot.

Tall pyramids! that stand unto yourselves a law,
In dignity supreme awake our breathless awe,
Soaring ambition's proof, examples of stern pride,
Witnesses monarchy could suffering deride,
You to our prying eyes present securely shrined,
With mark of early thoughtful musing of the mind,
The sign and indication of profound belief,
Protection of the dead rescued the soul from grief!
Yet further monuments remain all doubt to quell,
Tablets, papyrus rolls survive the news to tell;
Show Egypt's thoughts and fancies, to our notions strange,
With treasured pious views, ever resisted change.
While countless Pharaohs reigned, they could set down their speech
Which hardly baffles now the sage its plan would reach;
Who seeking life to know while history yet was young
Can understand beliefs, the hopes whereto folk clung.
When swift revolving Earth five thousand times had flown
Less oft than now about the Sun-god's shining throne,
Aimed one in Pharaoh-land to write instead of say,
Employing picture-forms he could his thought convey.
For if he crudely drew a leaning, toppling wall,
Suggested he the notion more might chance to fall,
While showed he, 'neath the sky, a star of feeble light,
Through darkness evident, he signified the night.
Deeds being so depict, as well, ideas profuse,
The graphic art advanced, gained a yet further use;
From a wish definite to give each separate sound
Men limned a lion, eagle, figure square or round:

By hieroglyphic signs that mere at first appal,
Pourtrayed e'en consonants and forms phonetical,
Linked letters into words which, if they seem uncouth,
Were by convention fixed and adequate for truth.

III

Lo! we can read the stories of that ancient time;
Communing with the past, enter another clime.
The crafty goddess Isis, laughing at all law,
Would from the Sun-god Ra a dark avowal draw;
So took a little water mingled with fine earth,
And made a serpent's form, by speaking gave it birth;
Then sent it to attack the great one as he moved,
Inflicted tortures that beyond endurance proved,
Relented not until his cryptic name he said,
Which ne'er by mortal lips was uttered without dread!

IV

Upon a splendid lake to which a rower lent
Lucklessly from her locks a turquoise ornament,
A score of beauteous damsels drew, with motion fleet,
That lord who highest raised his pyramid complete.
Yet Khufu saw a tear-drop on a fair cheek fall,
Hastened a great magician to his help to call,
Who, there, the waters piling, nearer earth left dry
So that the joyous maiden could her gem espy;
Whereon, subsiding soon, the liquid rampart steep
Allowed the wave once more to stay three fathoms deep.

V

Ah, Egypt was the home of magic's steadfast sway,
Where mysteries occult on all sides found a prey,

As when, in times remote, Abaanar's worth could bring
The gracious honour of a visit from his king;
Whose captain of the guard so pleased Abaanar's wife,
Forthwith betwixt the twain the thought of love grew rife.
Wotting of which, Abaanar hied him to the priest,
Who modelled readily in wax a hideous beast,
That, thrown within the stream, when next the lover bathed,
Held him for seven days in vile embraces swathed.
Spake good Abaanar with his sovereign on the shore,
Brought crocodile and foe in natural form once more!
Righteously raged the monarch, called the saurian's name,
Made o'er to him the wretch, the woman to the flame!

VI

Miracle! it was e'en a frequent sacred care
For the chief priestly wizard, usual, to prepare;
Whose sentence, ere the bull of sacred breed was killed,
Transferred vile sin to it, and all with comfort filled
That saw the victim sink 'neath imprecations stern:
They in vicarious woe much goodness could discern!
As said a traveller from Hellas' ancient shore,
A famous annalist ere Egypt's day was o'er.
The mind alert, or here or there, on Earth can trace
The slow development and progress of man's race.
That he is 'neath a curse, he sometimes will assert,
And that atonement's wonders should due wrath avert.
At first he offered salt, or bread, or fruit, or wine,
A comely slave or kid, a lamb or heifer fine,

Until it came about, perchance a royal son
As an incarnate god willing to death was done;
Ay, Hindustan has seen even in recent years,
Loss of an honoured youth allaying human fears.
How long has sacrifice around the heart sure twined,
Suppressed remorseful thought and lightened load of mind;
Succeeded gaping wounds and gloominess to heal,
Brought transient benefit or an abiding weal!

VII

Lo! well ere Menes reigned, as graves uncovered show,
Men thought the sleeping dead direst adventures know;
And feeling apprehension, even pangs severe,
Sighed for a remedy to cure their widespread fear.
'Twas for imagination lofty to propose
A gentle saviour pure in former time arose;
For genius to adorn a tale of nature rich
Which, as a legend growing, could mankind bewitch,
Who virtue sure perceived when one for others wrought,
Himself in fearful toils of misery was caught.
In earliest days of Egypt lived a wondrous king,
Gracious, perchance divine, such goodness did he bring;
Ever he passed the day explaining to his folk
How they might deal with Nature, lessen hardship's yoke.
Alas! Osiris soon nothing but evil met,
Awoke the envious hatred of his brother Set,
Who with conspirators in a strong chest enclosed
Their lord benevolent, him to the Nile exposed.

Tireless, o'er waters wide, Isis her quest pursued,
Late, on a Syrian shore, her husband's body viewed ;
Then strenuous o'ercoming difficulties sore,
Fearlessly Delta-wards the cherished coffin bore.
But, Set, a hunter always zealous in the chase,
Cast roving eyes upon the secret resting-place ;
Asunder tore the corse and scattered to the wind
The relics for which Isis, sick at heart, had pined ;
Who searching through the land found here and there
a part,
Faithful with sepulture relieved her sorrowing heart.
Yet he that has been slain must heavenward
ascend,
Destined to judge the dead, display himself their
friend ;
Shine as the central figure of a mystic cult
That gave the timid hope, inspired them to exult.

VIII

Arose a Saviour, when Osiris' course was run,
Young Horus, the avenger and true Isis' son,
Who, as each parting soul unto Osiris clave,
A succour generous and sure assistance gave.
For, when it came about, after a last sad day,
Even a king in his sarcophagus must stay,
From sacrilegious eyes for ages sealed and hid,
Perchance beneath the weight of a huge pyramid,
God Horus to the tomb a wondrous comfort lent,
Was present when the soul upon its journey went.
No more with body crouching in its cell of stone,
Save for some jars of food and arms of flint, alone ;
Now, less forlorn, the spirit from its prison hied,
In subtle comity with Him for men had died ;

Far to Osiris sped, through perils of the worst,
By that great deity soon to be blest or curst.
Perceive the Pharaoh then, endowed with magic aid
And words of solemn power leaving him not afraid,
Which, as a ritual learnt and spoken oft as prayers,
Previous had turned his mind to heavenly affairs,
Were scored upon a stone or written on a scroll,
Linking him to the god who must the dead control.
Still is it clearly carved within the earth's deep womb,
In Memphis' cemetery and Unas' ancient tomb:—
"I, Horus, am thy son, and thee have purified;
'Tis Horus stays the dead Osiris now beside;
Leaving the clay, thy soul shall know a higher birth.
Unas, toward Heaven come! great Ra admits thy worth!"
Which Ra was god supreme as the Sun manifest,
Often in adoration thus by hymn addressed:—
"O Ra, the self-begotten, Earth's o'erwhelming king!
Whose praises glorious the gods continuous sing,
O thou that art by all thy followers adored,
Of righteous truth the fount, eternity the lord;
Behold, the gods rejoice with all their company,
When, rising at the morn, thou sailest through the sky,
Leaving the serpent fallen wounded by thy knife,
Thou to whom law and ceaseless order are as life!"
For Ra in mortal shape, had bruised and rendered lame,
Apap a reptile monster; him oft overcame;
Thus said that Heaven's orb a mighty victory wins
When he, at dawn and winter, fresh his course begins.

IX

Still (amidst Egypt's silent solitary calm)
Arrayed with piety, blest with religion's balm,
Drew folk at any hour a light and genial breath,
Or spent they every moment contemplating death ?
Direct thy vision to the old sepulchral halls
Which near to Memphis stand with decorated walls !
'Tis long, maybe in truth some fifty centuries,
Since Ti, king's architect, with such his heart could please !
Aware he cannot well to earth for ever cling,
And hoping friends will later generous offerings bring,
He figures active life upon his vast estates,
The work producing wealth and all thereto relates ;
And sacrifice pourtrays, so would the good coerce
To help him after death his future cares disperse.
See, hardy labourers with ploughs prepare the land,
Wield primal implements, the oxen's toil command ;
Scatter the seed to be by rams soon trodden in ;
In proper time with sickles deft the harvest win.
Now are the sheaves dispatched on asses to the store,
The ears in heaps up-piled, the bullocks used once more
To thresh, by treading out, the kindly golden grain,
Which must be sifted, winnowed, gathered up again.
At first with axe and adze a prostrate tree is shaped,
Then hammers, drills are used, the thick boards sawn and scraped.
Here, carpenters evoke a door with vigorous skill,
There, diligent a vessel fashion to their will.
Glides by a sailing-ship by huge oars wafted, steered,
Fall hippopotami upon the marshes speared ;

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Hunters and hounds, bird snarers, fishers are beheld,
And headmen who to aid taxation live impelled;
While peasant women march with loads from each estate
And writers in their office all things regulate,
Though Ti, at table seated, every gift reviews,
Whom at a distance harpers, flautists would amuse.
Thus skilfully he sought pursuits to emphasise
And in that radiant tomb fine art must exercise!
For artists were encouraged in those days of yore!
The Pharaohs were impelled all genius to adore!

X

Even the caseless stones of that huge pyramid,
Whose grandeur seems for ever weakness to forbid,
Enthrone an architect! So too, that takes by storm
Which shows the folk of Egypt worshipped living form:
Gigantic sphinx of Gizeh! what was thy first cause?
Creature with human features and a lion's paws,
Symbolic canst thou be of problems in our life
Which enigmatic rouse discussion, endless strife?
Maybe thy lineaments show likeness to a king's,
Or that still smiling mouth the Sun-god's praises sings?
And yet wast after when great Ra ruled over all
And held the pious in a pure religion's thrall.
But figures less astounding, carved to look like man,
Now far and wide abound, our admiration fan,
Having escaped mischances of destructive wars;
And thus some giants stay, as where the traveller scores
His Greek or Latin verses on the lower limbs
Of Memnon's statues, whereof one, oft chaunted hymns

Or uttered a sweet sound of music at the dawn
When Nature's breezes o'er the heated stone were drawn.

XI

As long ere Homer's age as his preceded ours,
In a most ancient time, Egyptian sculpture towers,
Aiding an early custom that inclines to drape
The "double" of the dead; decking in pleasant shape
One to the tomb has access by his own small door,
Where mourners faithfully set tribute down before.
And must not every ghost more willingly abide
Where'er the sculptor skilled a graven home supplied?
Which notion, and the leanings of the rich, provoke
The artist unto triumphs through the chisel's stroke;
Giving, as they appeared and breathed and even thought,
The folk of long ago, now to our epoch brought.
As on his throne he sits accustomed to command,
Calm Pharaoh Khephren sways the future of his land;
Beside a royal wife fearless and proud of look,
A general stands would scarcely opposition brook;
A scribe with eager gaze, to his papyrus sheet
Applies his slender reed to make his work complete,
Aware that negligence may bring his back the lash,
Omits not to grasp firmly while his dark eyes flash.
Behold a face rotund and destitute of griefs,
With portly form perchance was once a village chief's;
One of inferior race, e'en vulgar, he appears,
Successful and content, well carrying his years.
Patient and docile here low kneels an underling,
Has learned how fortune can unequal favours fling;

To whom, like many a boor rude sheltered on that soil,
Life brings but scanty rest from irksome, arduous toil.

XII

Did folk, whom even thus the traveller surveys,
In spiritual thought indulging, chaunt the Sun-god's praise?
Or a divinity nigh all around them find,
See something to respect in every form of mind?
Regarding life with awe, the race was overcome
By signs of mystery in lower creatures dumb;
Must an exalted soul in beings such suppose
As ever loyally protected man from woes.
Blest with sagacity as well as vital breath,
The cat destroyed a pest; as instrument of death
Became the eye of night giving a plaintive mew,
Was second emblem of that lunar crescent new,
Which found its first in ibis' curved and slender bill,
A bird that should its mission against snakes fulfil.
Lo, Nature visible in different forms was dressed,
In subtle characters to man grew manifest;
The ibis too, was Thoth, intelligence divine;
Sekhmet, as lioness, waged war of fierce design;
And while divinity persisted in that star
Whose pale bewitching beams encourage from afar;
Each strange display of force was pious recognised,
No meanness was contemned nor monstrous shape despised.
Thus, then, in wonderment at endless Nature grand,
This folk on every side traced a mysterious hand,
Often would deities adorn with creatures' heads,
As Horus, falcon-man, who light around him sheds;

Or give a special mark symbolical to each,
As Maat who, 'neath a feather, love of truth would teach.

XIII

Even by trinity to reverence being fired,
People, both here and there, three several gods admired.
So Maker Ptah at Memphis, stayed of such the chief,
While Ammon brought to Thebes its principal relief;
Great Ammon who was bound with Mut, a consort dear,
And Khonsu, a good son, that as the Moon, shone clear.
If loomed for fellahin perchance a Cosmic power
That in vague grandeur rising, o'er their gods must tower;
Yet could such deities around the heart-strings wind,
Deep cravings gratify and sate the simple mind.

XIV

Early, were sages, too, as Ptahhetep the good.
Who thus proclaimed himself beneficent of mood:—
"Weak as I am, and old, my son! I counsel give.
Humbly advance thy steps, learn ever well to live!
Deal harshly not with those who should thy word revere,
Alarm not other men or God may make thee fear;
With gratitude accept the presents of the great;
Bearing a message, give it, alter not its weight;
When farming, thou shouldst look for praises from thy men;
E'er bend thee low before a greater citizen!
Be diligent, increase thy riches day by day;
Hast thou a son? direct, as God would like, his way!
Resist the lure of passion, save thou hast a wife;
Ever shun anger, rage and all that leads to strife!

If married, cherish well one that has gained thy love,
With softness think of her as of a gentle dove!
And if from poverty thou hast advanced to wealth,
In trust thou holdest it, neglect not spiritual health!"
So wisdom made its effort, sought men's minds to mould,
Aided morality, would high ideals unfold
While many Pharaohs ruled, and dynasties saw change,
And Egypt's life developed force and higher range.

XV

Venturing soon across the deserts of the East,
The caravan its march at Red Sea borders ceased;
Or energy was turned to riches in the rocks,
The skilful transference of monstrous granite blocks;
Or kings of virile cast drew Nubia 'neath their yoke,
Or made the Fayum fertile at a single stroke;
Contriving great canals and dikes for many a mile,
Lent an extension to the miracle of Nile.
In a new capital, while Memphis widened less,
Since a desire was born more southerly to press,
A mighty monarch caused that Labyrinth to rise,
Which with three thousand chambers woke the world's surprise,
Offered at death to sacred crocodiles a home,
That in their sluggish life were free revered to roam.

XVI

Now is the land throughout, as hieroglyphs record,
Apportioned into nomes, each with its feudal lord,
As Khnemhotep, a prince o'er "the Gazelle" holds sway,
Whose tomb at Beni-Hasan still can wealth display.

Hid in Earth's natural crust, what secrets are there strewn!
The pillar showing progress, from the limestone hewn,
Is no more primitive, for corners square abound,
Or numerous of edge appears of section round,
Dreams that it may perchance of joyous life partake,
As lotus or papyrus, soon its past forsake.
Who enters such great chambers, sunlit through the door,
Rapt stands and gazes wondering vivid scenes before,
Recalls how sons of Jacob visited the land,
By famine sorely pressed, disaster would withstand.
For seeking privilege into the nome to pass,
With gay attired women, children on an ass,
Some Semites swart are seen with pointed beard well grown
And feature aquiline, and bows and arrows shown.
Offering young gazelles and an eye pigment famed,
They through a royal scribe their project have proclaimed;
Who carries to his prince a writ papyrus deed,
From which unrolled he would a statement duly read;
And so are showered on us from this cavern's source,
True riches from the past of human intercourse!
Khnemhotep hunts or fishes; there, engage in toil
The potter at his wheel, the delver of the soil.
The figs are gathered in and purple wine is made,
From weaving cloth to sculpture, arts are well pourtrayed.
An image of the dead unto the tomb is borne,
Posture some dancing girls in front of folk that mourn;

Behold, a ship conveys women and children all
Abydos-ward to join the solemn festival;
Whither the corse is hurried for a while to lie,
Honoured and sanctified, the dead Osiris nigh.

XVII

Lately oft rescued from the dusty desert's seal,
Pharaoh-land's monuments strange mysteries reveal,
Loom radiantly as treasures from the darkness called,
Speak, after endless silence, by neglect appalled.
A sacred spot exists could far exert a spell,
Beyond the city walls a lasting cult compel;
Abydos! that remains a glory to the sight,
A cause of thrilling awe, superlative delight!
Clear of o'erflowing Nile and yet its bounty near
From Afric's scorching blast and the sand's tide severe
Sheltered by Libya's hills; set in a plain where soon
For dwellers fortunate, slight toil procured the boon
Of harvests gathered oft, and doubtless then as now,
Gay larks insistent soaring spurned each leafy bough,
And mocked the steady ways of reapers brown and bare
And binders of the sheaves and gleaners showing care;
A city, Thinis hight, in Middle Egypt rose,
With a race dominant which prowess could disclose
'Neath leaders long inclined to customs primitive,
As witnessed by the signs their sepulchres still give.
This Thinis, soon or late, Abydos blest became;
Maintaining not regard for gods of lesser fame,
A path to eminence of sure duration found,
Since it received Osiris' head within its ground;
What time his brother Set atrociously had dared
To scatter wide his corse, and Isis for it cared;

In which most holy place lay myriads of the dead
Whose mummies guarded were when souls to heaven sped.
Near to the desert's edge and mountain precipice
By cornfields brave approached, as it might be to kiss;
The traveller perceives a structure all must thrill
Who pace the shifting soil, approach that crumbling hill.
Looks he upon a court and ancient columns carved,
A worthy view, no more of admiration starved;
Whither, fanes mightiest successive being built,
Oft generous gifts were brought; and were libations spilt
Where Pharaoh still symbolic for fresh favour calls,
Whom the requiting god with promises enthralls.
And animation rules the hoary figures shown;
They yet converse through signs, resplendent live in stone,
Forthstanding in the dimly penetrable gloom,
On pillars forest-like, that ever towering loom,
Magnificent succeed to form long avenues,
And parallel advance amid rich glowing hues,
Toward vaulted chambers seven, knowing each its god;
Where even mighty Pharaoh, waving incense, trod.
But cause of Egypt's love and sweetest Isis' grief,
Here, just Osiris shone the deity in chief;
Whom pure and spotless priests, kissing the ground drew near
In order to exalt him and his shrine revere.
Chaunting some solemn words, 'mid ceremonies chaste,
With sceptre, crown and scourge, his form anew they graced;

Bore him within his barque, upon occasions high,
Through many a chapel made most wondrous to the eye.

XVIII

Still, sanctuaries are found, the desert waste below,
Which wealth of ritual and hoary credence show,
Thus Horus lightly touches the great god that died,
And joyous sees forthwith Osiris vivified!
So, at the proper hour, with trouble manifold,
The prescient priests prepare a statuette of gold,
Place in its hollow form some barley seed and sand,
Ensure, in later days a fructifying land.
Osiris-like, the image slow in state is borne
To a small garden near, where rushes it adorn;
While water added daily from the risen Nile
Lends the growth impetus, due progress can beguile.
Ah, what a god is this, can promises fulfil,
Induce prosperity and drive away each ill!

XIX

With such a puissant friend to pluck the sting from death,
At feasts men fate regard with undisturbed breath,
Nor quake to view a mummy brought within their reach,
The while a harper singing ventures thus to teach:—
"Ne'er baulk your heart's desire with foolish thought of pain,
Who knows if happy hours will ever come again?
Nay, generously proving, test each pleasure's worth,
Alas! none takes with him dear treasures from the Earth;

Yet win a righteous name, harsh destiny defeat,
Remember those in need; oh, make their lives more sweet!"
Oft poets cast their spell and story-tellers wrote
In strangest Pharaoh-land, in years the most remote;
Treated of damsels gentle who would love confess
And sadly sighed and pined their dear one to caress;
Or sang of noble youths and their excessive flame
For maids with hearts rebellious, difficult to tame;
As, thus, of brothers twain, the elder with a wife
That hopeless loved the younger, so her rage being rife,
She to her lord false-plained the youth had done her harm,
Whereon his life was saved even through magic's charm!
Much hardship and misfortune, doubtless, were then known,
Though sunny life in Egypt could in part atone.
As for the highly placed, they luxury scarce scorned,
Delighted in the home with garden choice adorned;
Desiring shady paths, small lakes and lotus fine,
Neglecting not the trellis clad with purple vine,
Would summon oft musicians, dancing girls well skilled,
Wrestlers and light buffoons if gaiety were willed.
Nor lacked the low their games, who dexterous flung the ball,
Laughing and joyous sailed to view the festival,
And thinking not of stern or solemn deities,
Dreamed of sweet goddess Hathor, only such would please.

XX

Hail, templed Dendereh! united to a past
Most ancient, since thy scheme was first by Khufu cast;
Thee Hathor ruled, down glancing from her face stone-hewn,
Nor yet by ruthless time upon the desert strewn;
Goddess whose matchless beauty soon became the cause
Of worship universal, long-sustained applause;
For loveliness supreme in her being recognised
And by the high priest shown, deliriously was prized!
Nigh to her sanctuary when day and month were ripe,
Was heard the sound of lute and tambourine and pipe;
While, thronging outer courts, peered through the pillars tall
Vast crowds as she was led into an inner hall,
Seeming to the elect the soul of perfect love,
Within, enchantment veiled! pure gold and gems, above!
So Hathor by the priests out of her chamber dark,
While summer yet was young, was carried in her barque,
When all prostrating them brightly with flowers wreathed,
Later the wine-cup tasted, danced and careless breathed.

XXI

Long moved by love and awe, art, literary rules,
Chastened by strictest law and the severest schools,

Egypt in sunshine dwelt a mighty space before
Her outlook was obscured by foemen's skill in war;
Who driven forth at last, behind them left a taste
For empire, in a people by their sufferings braced.
Toward south and east, then Thutmos drave his conquering arms,
Had learned the chariot's use for military alarms.
Born of a royal sire irregularly wed,
A queen next reigned to marriage with her brother sped;
A sovereign lady, titled Hathsheput the Great,
Who helped her father first in managing the State;
But soon, as if to prove a woman's gratitude
For gentleness with which her sex on Nile was viewed,
Deserving sure renown, ascended to the throne,
Knew triumphs glorious, and ruled the land alone.
Whose fancy could afresh the temple's shape unlock;
With novel fanes adorning Thebes' outlying rock,
Raised avenues of sphinxes, stately colonnades,
Often a terrace steep that rare the sun evades.
E'en yet the standing walls present, in colours bright,
An ancient enterprise provoking her delight
Who sent toward Araby a fleet of vessels five
That with the land of Punt should brave for commerce strive.
First making fast his squadron on river shore,
The leader places gifts a native prince before;
Who bringing gold and costly presents, in return
Can e'en a lavish feast of the good strangers earn.
Last, Hathsheput at home inspects each prize displayed,
As precious shining ores within the balance weighed,

Secures frankincense trees for holy Ammon's use,
Sets leopards and giraffes from strict confinement loose.
Which queen, in king's attire, adventurous and bold,
The priestly office dares in ceremonies uphold!

XXII

Again a famous Thutmos tireless effort spent,
A warrior showed himself upon the conquest bent
Of nearest Palestine, far Syria and the south;
Thought to win luscious morsels for his country's mouth.
He, too, constructed fanes mysteriously dark,
And like another prince, on history set his mark,
Amenhotep who soon with huge Colossi mazed;
At Luxor rows of columns, sanctuaries upraised,
Told in stone hieroglyphs a story unto all
Of magical events his mother could befall.
Proudly the sculptured walls relate in graphic speech,
How Ammon's favour came a maiden choice to reach;
Whom Isis counsel lends, can graciously advise
To sate the god's demand; but previous sanctifies.
Then Thoth, sagacious, hastes to the young maid with news,
Soon she will bear a son but goodness to diffuse;
And Khnemu, drawing nigh, brings unto weakness aid,
Subtily helps the life fresh in a creature made.
Tenderly goddesses, with voices sweet and mild,
Rejoice in unison to view the new-born child;
Whom Isis to the god presents as offspring won,
While Ammon hails his babe, descendant of the Sun;
Fervent embraces him and with attention lists,
For Hathor on the infant's lofty fate insists.

Thus it arrives the princeling, shielded from all woe,
Waxes in strength and comes from gods at hand to know
They highly honour one destined 'fore men to shine,
Who being drawn within the galaxy divine,
As Amenhotep reigns, the splendid myth would weave,
He is a deity; wills men shall such believe.
Ambitiously this sovereign, intercourse maintained
Even with Babylon; afar his consort gained;
Then fathered a successor that with body weak
Cared for a high ideal and valiantly must speak.

XXIII

Akhnaton! thou a place amongst the pure hast won!
No greater Pharaoh e'er descended from the Sun!
An enemy of every weaker creed and cult,
Thou didst in Aten only long as God exult;
Must teach, in manner clear, none other should enthral
Than through divinest beams exerts his power on all.
So, forthwith, war arose 'twixt thee and Ammon's priests
That craved vast influence, state ceremonies and feasts,
With fury saw thee, driving Ammon from thy thought,
Uprear a distant city soon to greatness brought;
Where, Aten's glory, thou hadst chiefly thy abode,
When thinking of the arts and what to God is owed;
When in a palanquin of state beside thy queen,
Or in a car, thou wast with daughters to be seen;
In nothing an ascetic, yet wouldst play the priest,
Ever of Aten thought'st, whose goodness ne'er has ceased!

'Tis such a monarch, anxious each false god to spurn,
Neither to Ptah, creator, nor kind Hathor turn,
Who proves o'er gentle and forsakes his warlike friends,
Supinely suffers loss, this prayer to Aten sends:—
"Lord of Eternity! who shinest through the days,
As Aten knowing love, distributest thy rays,
Cattle and fowl and tree and all things thee adore,
For thou, the only God, free givest from thy store!
Thou hast created lands, ah, many a thing as well,
The little bird that taps ere issuing from its shell,
Sons, daughters from their mother sprung to glorious life;
Thou hast assisted each, all strengthened for the strife!"

XXIV

And thus a Pharaoh soared, to worship one god learned,
E'en as the Hebrew folk that for Jehovah yearned;
Whose ancient sacred writings oft of Egypt speak,
Invite us for a trace of Israel there to seek,
Lend to a wondrous carved high obelisk some heed,
Set where the temple stood on which On's priest agreed
To give a wife to Joseph; him that knew despair,
Despite a woman's guile, gained royal favour rare.
Lo, cities' sites appear, past which an eager host
Fleeing from Goshen, hastened swift from post to post;
As written in the records of that chosen race
Which wandered forty years, last found a resting-place,
And there a Pharaoh once had military affairs,
As witnessed by a stone, the name of "Israel" bears!

Yet scarce for long could Nileland but one godhead
own,
Neglect hoar trinities and Aten's might enthrone;
New monarchs, satisfied with worships of the past,
Ammon recalled to life and Mut and Khonsu fast,
Till one from northern Tanis unto Nubia's strand
Erected temples, gave assurance to the land.

XXV

'Twas Ramses, ne'er averse to view his statue rise,
Further than Palestine carried war's enterprise
And with the Khita coped, at Kadesh spite their guile,
Made effort to subdue, o'ercome with force their wile.
For when with subtlety his Syrian foe had sent
Two cunning spies, to lead him into ambush meant,
Dealing them stripes, he gained confession of the lure,
Re-drew his plans and hoped fair battle to secure.
Already to his chiefs in council he appealed,
When the swift agile Khita caused his troops to yield;
Wherefore he stayed no more in pomp upon his throne,
Upbraiding officers who should the truth have known,
But, girding on his armour, towards his chariot stept,
Forward to meet the foe, 'midst admiration, leapt.
The Khita swarm as locusts over hill and dale,
Fast speed their drivers, spearmen, would Ra's host
assail,
Till Ramses shows the valour quickening his heart
Can set him far above, from lesser men apart.
Trembles his charioteer when desperate courage rare
Brings them to such a plight as had made most despair;
But the king calls on Ammon, vows an offering vast,
Implores the god to hear, requite a faithful past.

Then is the Pharaoh strengthened, sees the foe fall slain,
Whose corpses in great number cumber all the plain,
Making it toil immense to count their severed hands
And bind the prisoners' arms with cruel tightened bands.
Thus Ammon-Ra clear caused his glorious light to shine,
And Nileland scarce could doubt her ruler was divine,
Who to relate his triumph lofty pylons raised
Where the skilled sculptor pictured whom the poet praised.

XXVI

Soon conquests so supreme made luxury abound,
Vast Thebes, for gold and silver, ivory renowned;
To gather richest spoils in galleys at her quays,
Procure a glut of slaves unhappy forced to please.
Thronged multitudes to streets with rows of sphinxes filled,
While speeding gilded chariots humble peasants thrilled;
In splendid palaces successive Pharaohs vied,
Erecting mighty temples, soothed their haughty pride.

XXVII

But while millenia passed the pious were unchanged,
Seldom grew carelessly from thought of Heaven estranged,
Met dread of punishment for every sin on Earth,
By strictest ritual, hereafter plead their worth.
Behold, from east to west, under an azure sky,
In pomp the mummied corse was borne that it might lie
Beyond the mighty stream, where desert sands begin,
So find a resting-place eternal rock within.

Upraised, it views the gifts set down before the tomb,
Is carried solemnly into the funeral room,
With holy instruments light touched on mouth and eyes
By priests would soft arouse and make the "double"
rise,
Which having entered a fine statue of the dead,
Sits at the feast, presides, with meat or fruit is fed;
The while a harpist aims the drama to enhance,
Melodious, entertains with dirges, solemn chaunts.
At last when sorrowing friends disperse with frequent
sigh,
The quaking soul prepares upon its course to fly,
And offers for its mummy a brief anxious prayer
That such may 'scape corruption through the god of air;
E'en when the spirit's self, with sin's forgiveness gained,
Has, from the judge Osiris, endless life obtained.
Grasping a staff, the pilgrim traverses the hills,
Seizes an amulet, if thought of peril chills,
Never, through crocodile or lion, comes to harm,
Merely makes evident the ring upon his arm.
Oft challenged, he yet nears the islands of the blest,
Within the fields of peace appears less far from rest;
There, names each gate and guardian nigh Osiris' court,
Announcing he is "Horus," ever wins support;
To the great hall of truth then tremulous is led,
Dares face the righteous God who judges stern the dead:
Where Thoth behaves as scribe, while strange Anubis
weighs
And balances the heart to tell what it betrays.
Bending in lowly homage to that sun of night,
Osiris, holy lord, who with a look can blight,
The wretched suppliant, before his last assize,
Sustains a part extreme with words and groans and cries.

He has no evil done! nor sought to be unjust!
Nor any caused to weep, and e'er avoided lust;
Suspicions of commandments broken thus assails,
Asserting innocence, in vigour never fails.
Soon to Osiris led, if but his heart be pure,
He wins an everlasting happiness secure,
And entering the realm celestially divine,
Is greeted with loud cries of gladness in the shrine;
But if his heart be false! he to the flames is sent,
Or by a hideous beast, till death's swift moment, rent!

XXVIII

Disordered nigh were minds by perils such, o'ercome,
Made by an autocrat ambitious priesthood dumb,
Who smiting all the land, instilled a drear belief
Conducing unto awe and feebleness and grief.
Behold, a hierarch e'en Pharaoh overthrew
About the time when stern Achilles Hector slew;
Whereon affliction sore for Egypt sad arrived,
For Æthiopians swart to mount her throne contrived.
Then dwellers by the Nile Assyria's hosts expelled,
But felt Cambyses' wrath, dire ruthlessness beheld,
Too, suffered woes from Greeks, whom Romans overbore:
Lo! Pharaohs vanishing ne'er looked on glory more!

XXIX

Religion natheless throve, so that to-day is seen
Among old monuments, a gentle pair serene;—
Isis the kindly clasps an infant in her arms,
Wishes to shield her son divinest from alarms,
Who last a saviour grown, named Horus, sets men free,
As did Osiris lost and fastened to a tree.

Upon a little isle, whose beauty yet enchants
The thoughtful eager mind and earnest wondering glance,
Stayed loving Isis worshipped, honoured till the hour
A Christian empire thought to show its jealous power.
But still on Philæ's shore is sculptured her despair
Who on a consort's form must lavish gentle care;
Isis and Nephthys, both, low bend them down and weep,
Behold Osiris, their dear brother, past Earth's sleep,
Dejected scan his features, oft-time sigh and moan,
Neglect their duty never, leave him ne'er alone.
Ah, see with lofty mien young Horus strides to save
Quickens with vital breath one ready for the grave,
Who rises, as a judge, can crown man's earthly strife
With the surpassing boon of never-ending life!
Thus loved the pious such addition to their thought
As of Osiris even unto mischance brought,
Destined, when all was lost, from suffering to be won
Through the soft tenderness and favour of his son.
So Neith, a virgin goddess, spotless, ever chaste,
Could yet the joy divine of motherhood true taste,
For she, so priests announced, did with result aspire
To mother Sun-god Ra unaided by a sire.
And Ra created man, when first the mighty Nu
Dwelling in waters huge, spake his desire, forth drew
Sun and, employing him, gave Universe its birth
Since it was light that marked the Heaven from the Earth.
But if, or man was formed from mud on potter's wheel,
Or from a tear that dropped when Ra could sadness feel,

Mortals rebelled! Whence Ra caused pools of human
blood;
Or other god pushed waters primal into flood,
Determined to save none but in an agile boat
With the avenging power was fortunate to float.
Ere long, Osiris reigned, o'ercome in time by Set
His ever wicked brother, who would ills beget;
Yet, 'neath the influence of Thoth (the subtle mind
Of wondrous Universe) for ever grew enshrined
Isis the mild, to be by fearful woes subdued,
Last with the essence of immortal life imbued,
For safety far must speed, in lonely marshes bore
And nurtured saviour Horus that men might adore!
E'er since with how much more than gratitude,
respect,
Has man not shown him willing, of high thought
affect!

XXX

Before the royal tombs and Karnak's pillared halls
Or other edifice that Pharaoh-land recalls,
The traveller amazed regards the scarce changed face
Of progress civilised amid a primal race;
Beholds a shore had commerce, genius, wondrous
skill,
Deep love of art and science and an iron will;
Where, more than ever since, religion widely ruled,
The populace from youth to piety close schooled.
Land of the holy bull and sacred crocodiles,
Of mummies, migrant souls and Nature's glowing
smiles,
Later of intellectual tastes the famous seat,
As toil lures forth rich secrets from their sure retreat,

Thy early long advance the more majestic seems,
Stimulates with its marvels, force lends to our dreams!

Now if the human drama, with its hopes and fears,
In Pharaoh-land held revel through exhaustless years;
With other efforts, too, man braved his destiny,
Elsewhere on earth displayed a vast activity!

'TWIXT RIVERS TWAIN

MYTH

Imagination's triumph, airy myth !
Offspring of yearning hope, ever again
Possessed of life, though proved of spirit vain,
Despised of some and thrust aside forthwith !
Sure as the axe once forged by Heaven's smith
To free a goddess in Zeus' skull had lain,
Comes it, art willing, eager to sustain
Thought deeply stored as is the sap in pith !
'Twas thus Hephæstus, stirred by purpose sound,
Aided the timely birth of forces new,
E'en if he injured greatness, struck a god !
But such as life's strange riddles would expound
In manner false ; departing from the true,
Perchance, for fellow-men, prepare a rod.

'TWIXT RIVERS TWAIN

I

'Twixt Tigris and Euphrates, broad and bounteous
streams
Offering wealth alluvial, aiding human schemes,
Erst, by a torrid gulf, throve the Akkadian race,
Whose character, e'en yet, clay wedge-shaped letters
trace,
A stock superior, consummate in its fruit,
Too, of antiquity remote and undispute.
Thither roved immigrants, a home attractive found,
Fortunes of Akkad with a strain Semitic bound,
Till Babylonish cities swiftly could arise
Whose pristine wonders awe and cease not to surprise.

II

Men early in this land deemed spirit everywhere,
Now as a shadow strange, now hovering in air,
Endowed with life and motion, even sense and
thought,
Preventing earth and sky from passing into nought.
They read the Universe, or as to lofty stars
Or things sublunary; a magic which unbars
Sound influences used; for aiming to suppress
Zealous but ill-disposed spectres of wickedness,
And daunt the vampires dread that in abysses dwelt,
Whose hideous might mankind distraught had often
felt;

Driving forth incubi, Chaldeans must invoke
A rule beneficent, to save themselves thus spoke :—
"Spirits of Heaven and Earth! banish, expel the fiend!
May all the ills and sickness which have us demeaned
Depart, flee exorcised!" Still, if such uttered charms
Or potions white could cure, others begat alarms:
Witches and sorcerers delivered devilish spells,
Summoning plagues, conspired with occupants of hells;
Provoking misery, oppressed the weak with fear,
Perturbed them with the thought, destruction might be near.

III

Then arts once magical more marvellous became,
Brought astrologic, even astronomic fame,
For watchers of the sky, far in its grandeur saw
Planet divinities, beings devoid of flaw,
Pure emanations vast; nay, held proud human fate
Dependent on such stars as shall predominate
When infants first draw breath.
And yet, while lower folk
Scarce from the blacker arts and fetishism awoke,
Whose priests a ghost-world ruler furnished with a mind
Which more to devil than divinity inclined;
Deities rose, as Ea, ocean-wave and light
And Bêl superlative, the Sun-god dazzling bright,
Who was with reverence in Babylon adored,
With rigid ceremonial worshipped as a lord.
Never a day without a sacrifice was passed;
Sin-offerings marked the Sabbath, festival and fast,

Till, to the mercy seat, Bel Merodach divine
Quitting a golden table in an inmost shrine,
Neglected not to come ; when gods of highest worth
Each year acknowledged him supreme o'er Heaven and Earth.
Thus to the thought of One, Akkadians wonted grew
In a remotest age but lately brought to view ;
Whose hymn and chaunt and psalm much loftiness recall,
Letting appear a progress sound and spiritual.
Looking for help, they found that none e'er gave them ease
Save a god merciful whose wrath they could appease ;
To such confessed their faults and failures manifold,
Thus felt their natures soothed and hearts no longer cold.
And he was Father called, the life of each could save,
Patience was prone to show and willingly forgave ;
Furthering man's advance upon his gradual way,
Lessened the thought that fiends foully in ambush stay
Whence to hurl monstrous ills. So then a God made whole
The heart if stricken sore ; poured balm upon the soul
Of every feeble creature roused by high desire
To turn toward what is best and endlessly aspire.

IV

Still, Babylonia's secrets frequently are learned
From ruined palaces and treasures spade up-turned,
As ratifying seals, deeds duly execute,
Tablets a taste poetic constant can impute ;
Dried cylinders and cones with letters cuneiform,
Marking such ceaseless play of human stress and storm

As moderns also know. Lo ! 'tis our lot to steal
Thus oft on documents communities reveal
That loved the busy toil of builders, engineers,
Full-honoured scribes' and artists' quieter careers ;
Sent caravans to Persia, ships to Arab shores,
With textures dyed and carpets oped to commerce doors.

V

In pristine time ruled Sargon, who the legends state,
Was as a babe abandoned to a watery fate
By her that nourished him ; being saved amongst the reeds,
Through Istar's favour grew a help for others' needs,
Soon struck successfully at hill-tribe Elamites,
Then by the western sea, o'ercame the Amorites ;
Now formed a library with many a learned page
Which mapped the heavens well, the future could presage.
For wise astronomers the sun's appearance showed
As in the zodiac belt he changes his abode ;
They marked the constellations, chose for each a name,
Making its influence clear, would e'en its form proclaim.
Such early Sargon, knowing planet and fixed star
And when the pallid moon sun's greater light shall mar,
Ruled better for good roads, set up a letter post,
Joyed, with the sculptor's aid, his victories to boast,
Epistles sealed with gems which artists could engrave,
Years in their thousands ere the Greeks alike were brave !

VI

Sped many a century while cities throve as Ur,
Which yet as Eridu and Nippur lacked a spur

Until a monarch rose who fame acquired and power,
With his especial gifts o'er other kings must tower.
"Seize limb for limb and life for life!" behold the law
Which Khammurabi stern, ere Abram's epoch saw
Sound reason to dictate; a prince could earnest speak
In order that the strong should less oppress the weak!
So, long ere Homer shone as poesy's sweet fount,
Society to heights in Babylon would mount,
Where dowried was the wife, who might herself unite
With her own choice by civil and religious rite.
Well must the freeman learn to use the pointed style,
Nor bondsmen were neglect, whose masters might revile
But dared not strike o'er hard; ay, lawful it became
For skilful thralls to rise, if bearing a good name.
In such security and temper civilised
'Tis clear the benefits of literature were prized;
And thus among the books unto amazement move,
Loom fragments epical that, late deciphered, prove
The folk of Babylon loved legends of the past
Dealing with earliest things whereto man's thought is cast.
Behold, these primal poets splendid stories sang!
Even creation's tale thus in the cities rang;—

VII

Was neither Heaven nor Earth; all space stayed silent, dumb,
Nor herb nor brute nor man, nor god to life had come;
Vast ages must elapse ere fate inclined to turn,
Allure the waters deep from dull existence stern;
Such waters as, at once, were God and Universe
And dragon called Tiâmat, huge, surpassing fierce!

'Twas she that bore the gods (as oldest records spoke)
But having jealous grown, her favours would revoke,
Against her progeny hurled serpents bent on war,
And yet in horrid wrath fresh monsters often bore.
Her to o'ercome, the gods in council at the feast
Would ponder and debate, never a moment ceased,
Till Merodach, great chief, driving a car four-horsed,
Invincible, sublime, unto the contest coursed,
Deftly a net outspread and held her as he smote,
Took all the winds in one and drave them down her throat,
At last transfixing her; for as the gods had said,
Order must reign below.
Sharp cleaving, then, the dead;
He made from higher parts the Heaven, and lower, Earth;
And next created stars and brought the years to birth.
Nor were the months forgot, nor days to which the moon
Appears a nightly queen conferring a rich boon.
Now Merodach shapes herbs and beasts and creeping things;
So from his blood, with clay made stiff, a creature springs
Shall listen to such laws:—"Let hearts stay ever pure,
Show mercy, lend God awe, a lengthy life ensure;
Let none against his neighbour e'er ill feelings own,
Each keep his word and vow, with prayer for sin atone!"
Nor graven tablets fail to show how man arrived
Whose makers sage to mould both heart and soul contrived.

And whence came hateful woe? Poets had brief to seek,
Recalled how first the dragon aimed her ire to wreak,
Whence, onyxes, carved agates, amethysts relate
How minds imaginative could deal with cruel fate;—

VIII

'Twas in his earliest days, set in a garden rare,
Rash man an error made he never could repair,
For then an evil power wrapt in a shrewd disguise
Seduced a being weak to steal a cursed prize.
Stand 'neath a perfect tree, which points and branches true,
A man and woman keeping rounded fruit in view,
While nigh to her whom priests have often held the cause
Of ills and wickedness, a serpent steady draws,
Whispering in an ear which pines for tidings sweet,
"Gather the apple, lo! win happiness complete."
Thus ancient is the tale that Eve the fruit touched first
To suffer duly as befitted one accurst!
How long the powerful have leaned to theories safe,
Thought well that weaker ones should primarily chafe
Under the slur of guilt! Yet men, in such dark years,
Were overcome with horror and deep brooding fears;
And ever failed sin's load with measure true to weigh,
While obstacles to life persisted day by day;
Wherefore, when seas rebellious mounting into flood,
Discriminated not, thirsted for human blood,
The poet moralist in Babylonia saw
How, with appealing art, sin's punishment to draw;—

IX

Xísuthros, once, the just, being warned by Ocean's god
An angry Heaven would drown all that earth fairest trod;
Designed a wooden ship twice threescore cubits wide,
And on it set a house, where safely to reside,
Used bitumen and pitch, for stormy seas prepared,
With family and wealth, in fear, the mansion shared.
Duly he feasted and forthwith the signal gave
To a bold pilot, who, despairing, scarce could save
The fugitives forlorn. Now clouds stupendous fell,
Lightning's excursions sudden told approach of hell,
Appalling crashing peals annulled the shouted word,
Tempests continually to changeless horror stirred.
Six days the vessel rocks, at night is hideous tossed
Distracted 'midst the flood, when, every hope being lost,
Sudden a stillness comes as if God's ire were sate,
And next, 'neath brightest sun, the waves their size abate.
The seventh morn a dove by Xísuthros was sent
Land to discover; so, in time, a raven went,
A swallow last, till found the ship a summit high
And the awed voyagers grew less afraid to die.
Now Xísuthros recalls how sin should pay its price,
Swift offers up to Bêl a splendid sacrifice,
Ecstatical receives the god's supremest gift,
Asking an endless life which heavenward can lift!
So then, the clay betrays how pristine fancy soared
And Semites, 'twixt two streams, Bêl Merodach adored;

Nor from poetic minds such fall and deluge dread,
Creation from a deep, as legends, lightly sped.

X

Yet slight appeared these themes next the surpassing force
That swayeth ere the heart, can in deep channels course
And stir the inmost soul! Love's overwhelming power
To Babylonia seemed in evening light to flower
When Istar, beautiful, bent footsteps to pursue
Tammuz, the sky's chief glory, ravished from her view.
He, from his station high, o'ercome with misery fell
E'en to the nether world, descending into hell.
Whereat, through portals seven must the goddess pace,
Be ordered at each door a garment to displace,
So that defenceless she, brought low before the Queen
Of that far region drear, shall bow nor mar the scene
By memories of Heaven.
Her lover to reclaim,
Sweet Istar even braved the fiend of hideous fame;
Still from great deities above at no time ceased
Assistance to implore, till Tammuz stood released,
Once more could tread a path to mortals' vision dear,
Moving majestical across the Heavenly sphere.
Which story stayed the reason Babylon oft wept,
Dames, maidens tore their hair, and men sad silence kept,
Dissembling not their faith that stars encounter woe,
Like humankind must fearful perils undergo:

And held to such belief, ay long without a pause ;
Lived helped by art, religion, poesy and laws.

XI

But all were not desirous of a blissful peace
Since in the north, Assyria, would not warring cease,
Incited its stern race of hardy mountaineers
To drive their chariots fiercely, laugh at captives' tears.
There reigned Semiramis proudly as legends tell,
Whose beauty Ninus smote with such a wondrous spell,
He from his general won her, giving her a throne,
So she a kingdom ruled, voluptuous and alone,
Nor failed still more to gain, till nearing Hindustan,
And then became at death a deity for man.

XII

Now surest splendour came to Nineveh renowned
As prove the guardian bulls in palace precincts found,
Surviving symbols strange of mightiness and speed
That linked with human traits can make a foe give heed.
Towered Assyria soon o'er nations of the west,
E'en Babylon and Syria, Egypt sore oppressed :
For Tiglaths often loomed as conquerors far and wide,
While Shalmanesers lowered more than Israel's pride,
Boastful Sennacherib brought Judah to despair,
And Esarhaddon seemed of glory the true heir.
Soon in a famous epoch of the sculptor's art,
When either kings ahunting played a graphic part
Or struck so puissantly that foemen ever quailed,
And then the marble showed how prisoners die impaled ;

There flowered, ere the season of Assyria's fall,
The mightiest of the mighty, Ashur-bani-pal,
Who practised piety, God Merodach restored,
Encouraged literature while captains raised the sword.
Yet eastern tribes advance, swift, Nineveh o'ercome,
O'erwhelm with numbers huge and strike for ever dumb.

XIII

Once more see Babylon the centre whence a king
Governing made far cities with their envy ring:
Nabopolassar's son, Nebuchadnezzar reigned,
In arts of peace and war exceeding honour gained.
For soon as Pharaoh-Necho homage would compel
The Babylonian on him at Carchemish fell,
And, touched by victory's rage, to Lebanon advanced,
Proud Egypt's claim no more in Asia countenanced;
Forgiving not the rebel that o'er Judah ruled
Him with captivity as well as blindness schooled.
Though Hebrew seers lament, sad prophecies outpour,
Yet mightily the monarch by Euphrates' shore
His city beautifies.
So Babylon's strange name
Will scarcely through the ages lose its lustrous fame:
Monstrous, oft-towered walls enclose an area square,
Cleft by a stone-bridged river in a manner fair,
While lofty hanging-gardens with an aspect bold
On covered arches rise beneath a wealth of mould,
E'en forest trees support. Palaces vast stand nigh,
And temples, such as Bêl's, eight wondrous stories high.

The walls are pierced for gates tall, brazen, broad of beam,
As where an eager crowd is wont to cross the stream
Apt, since Armenia's snows can melting cause a flood,
To ask an outlet safe. Arrives a tale of blood,
Disaster of the worst. A crafty Persian foe
Well skilled in bowmanship, Babylon to o'erthrow,
High turns aside Euphrates ; down its empty bed
Travels by night, and is to guardless portals led,
O'ercomes his heavy-armed opponents, west and east,
Desists not till, at e'en, from need of strife released.
Follow in time revolt and further conquest late,
Decay, contemptuous treatment at the hand of fate !
Succeeding conquerors their several parts fulfil,
Greeks, Romans, Moslems, each, in turn inflict their will ;
Last, where was Babylon, exists unbroken calm,
Speed past a mound, Bedween, or linger 'neath a palm.

IRAN

POESY

If 'tis nigh past a singer's power to tell
How ravish hue, shape, fragrance of the rose ;
And, when is seen the wonder of the snows,
How sure pervades the giant mountain's spell ;
And how the maid must a hid tumult quell
Learning her lover's look with rapture glows ;
And later, passion rules with tender throes
And chaste delights ; if 'tis rare chanted well,
If ever griefs the sensitive shall throng
Because in Cosmos seems but small our strand,
So that the pious questionings withstand ;
Still in the moods when men for comfort long,
Although no mighty bard vast themes expand,
A sensuous skill shall wafting charm with song.

IRAN

I

Iran! thou land of deserts, mountains, rushing streams,
Green valleys, perfumed flowers, exalted sensuous dreams,
With solemn mystic faiths and burning thought replete
And fancies passionate on lips of singers sweet;
Where wrecked Persepolis reveals a madman's ire,
And Shiraz beautiful out-distances desire;
Land which, with Punjaub's plains, nurtured the Aryan race
And afterward obtained through warriors bold a place
Among States dominant; doubtless depends thy claim
To honour, not the least, on Zoroaster's name;
Author presumptive of a fine belief remote
Which from the Zend-avesta still a few proud quote!
Ormuz and Ahriman, spirits primeval twain,
Ever had struggled sore the mastery to gain;
When, sinking once their quarrel, they in union bred
All that we know, nay more, the Universe vast sped;
While, choosing each his part, this ever wrought for ill,
That, with benignant views, would righteousness fulfil.
Once Zoroaster begged Ormuz beneficent
Would clear reveal to him what good, the greatest, meant;
"He that of holiness recites the ardent praise,
Good words prefers and thoughts and deeds, rejects all ways

Ideas and speech of evil kind, O Zoroaster! he
Has glorified the principle of good for me!"
"Great Ormuz! Holy One! whither departs the soul?"
"A triple paradise is faithful man's just goal,
Whose spirit pure its way, thither made lovelier fights
To gain a final place among the endless lights!"
These Aryans to mind gifts Heavenly would recall,
Low bent before the flame, the sun's resplendent ball;
With ceremonial rites and priestly orders strict
Nourished a remedy for ills mankind afflict.
Awhile, man here advanced as to a zenith proud;
Persia's magnificence was far-off noised aloud;
Harassed she Pharaoh-land, e'en Babylon enchained,
Smote Macedonia, Thrace, though later Hellas gained
Over her victories. And yet, her might endured
That losing in the west, much easterly secured;
Too, saw with vigour rise a novel cult and bold,
For, in a trinity, Mithras was held of old
To represent the soul and spirit of the sun,
That monarch of a lofty pageant never done,
A fiery orb with grace fulfils an arduous task,
Climbing the firmament that men in warmth may bask.
God of the light and truth, Mithras, a saviour great,
Deep loved, has mysteries strange which comfort and await
Such as pursue his cult. A bull or lamb is slain,
Whose crimson stream falls sprinkled upon all would gain
Eternal and blest life; then the god's image mourned
Is from the tomb brought forth, while they that love, adorned,

Exult all woes are past. With dual mystic rite
Of bread and cup; through water cleansed; of heart contrite;
With grave austerities of hunger, thirst and cold,
The Persian devotee worshipped his lord of old.
Which steadfast faith, observed within a holy cave,
Through lengthy centuries ne'er felt an angry wave,
Advancing was accept in many a distant spot,
Until at last suppressed, by Christian folk forgot.
Yet graven texts, in Rome and subject countries found,
Show Mithras' sacred cult grew widespread and renowned;
The while in Persia, later, fell and cruel war
Waged was against it by a caliph conqueror
Ruthless and bigoted. Still, stayed the heart of man,
By aspiration filled, however history ran;
Who found a joy in verse and, keen of intellect,
Despaired not of an art his fancies should reflect.

II

Ah, poetry acquired a brilliance like to gold,
'Twixt Oxus and Jaxartes, in Khorassan old,
When sultans and viziers smiled upon letters chaste
Though Europe knew the darkness of an age debased!
Lately had Bagdad's prince, Haroun al Raschid, died,
Famous for strange adventures in that town, his pride;
And he that praised in verse such caliph's virtuous son,
Both for himself and Persia sure distinction won.
So followed other bards with elegies, quatrains,
To God or wine or love wrote odes, poured rhythmic strains;

And soon Iranian song fine names began to boast,
Triumphed Rudaki, showed of talents a great host.
And one dared undertake completely to set down,
Adorning vividly, tales of the kingly crown;
Was called not to the task till rivals long had striven,
Despite all efforts, scarcely in their labour thriven.
'Twas Fírdousí thus stepped upon the epic stage,
Shed lustre on the legends of a previous age;
Lauding the hero Rustum and Rakúsch his steed,
Drew pictures of the past, limned many a royal deed.
And yet such ardent singer, Fírdousí himself,
Felt woe exceedingly, being robbed of promised pelf
By the base favourite the Sultan's purse controlled,
Gave for the verses silver, not the promised gold!
Trembled the poet, raged, spake words of scathing scorn
Unto the niggard prince that honour had forsworn,
Solemnly warned Mahmoud to dread the wrath of God,
Then fled to Ghazni swiftly, Mázandáran trod;
To Bagdad turned him later, Irak, Kóhistán;
Encountered praise, or found folk could neglect or ban.
Unto his final sleep so passed the bard afflict,
When, Mahmoud must reward the worker he had tricked!
And friends, to use the gold which should atone for guilt,
A caravansary commemorative built.

III

Blest with a spirit bold in mood agnostic caught,
Ere long, in Naishapur, one Omar dwelt and thought,

Despised pretences false; electing to be true,
Thus his philosophy in song disclosed to view;—
Only is Earth assured, therefore thy life enjoy,
Draw pleasures in thy lure, vile misery alloy!
Wisdom! priests teach it not! the Infinite alone
Has knowledge of things hid and ever He has known.
Astronomer and bard, thus Omar Khayyám sage,
Valiantly must aver; would sorrows wide assuage;
As guidance sound preferred his own intelligence
To dubitable hopes, uncertain Providence.
The mystics held that Omar sang but of the soul,
And of its needs, ere last it knows the purest goal;
Still, when he asked that wine should unto him be brought,
Had he but Heavenly love for ever in his thought?
As one has deep adored, in days gone by, a maid,
Deflecting his affection, unto God then prayed
And shown thereby the force and unity of love;
So, many a bard must touch upon ideals above;
And in far Persia's land, whose poets numbered more
Than all who worshipped verse, elsewhere, on sea or shore,
Singers taught subtily the mystic to rejoice,
While they swayed worldly minds through sensuousness of voice;
Seeking reality in what is hid, divine,
They loosed imagination, widely found a sign;
Amazed, around them ever piercing glances cast,
At hand viewed symbols oft of truths were seeming vast.
So when the lily chaste, that opes her bosom white
To greet the morning sun, conceals her charms at night;

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Or the sweet bulbul plaining for the perished rose,
At evening is impelled his sorrows to disclose;
Or the choice lotus lifts in admiration deep
Her form to watch the moon, while callous mortals sleep;
Even is so pourtrayed the love unfortunate
Of youths and hapless damsels cursed by cruel fate!
True poets joyed to deem, enchantment once was real!
Anciently this or that a weirdness could reveal!
As who filled Jemschid's cup with luscious ruby wine,
The past, the present and the future could divine.
What powers were those possessed by Solomon, great king!
Could exorcise! or summon genii with his ring!
By Alexander, to his view would scenes entice,
Peering within his glass, advanced to Paradise!

IV

Near unbelievers born, within a zone of strife
On Iran's western pale, Nizámi sprang to life,
Fed a soul mystical, ascetic in its view,
Fanatic till he could his temper curb, subdue.
Shrinking from royal courts, he yet a voice would lift
Displaying tender feelings, a romantic gift;
Lived on a little barley, first slow found his rhyme,
Moved was to tell he leant toward ecstasy sublime.
He sang of Mahomet, thus bigots pacified,
But sought in ancient scenes to sate inherent pride,
Described how Khai Khosrau, a king by passion caught
A rival overcame through use of crafty thought.

For once Ferhad, the sculptor, brilliant as a star,
Dared love Shireen and so his monarch's rapture mar,
Who vowed he would submit if but the artist rose
To gain a glorious triumph with the chisel's blows.
Let him but carve a path through Béysitoún's steep mount
Allow a neighbouring stream to form a copious fount;
Next fashion every fragment and exactly hew
A statue wonderful! Shireen should be his due!
The lover is endowed with skill and wondrous power,
Never wrought Titan so in Hellas' earliest hour;
With many a doughty stroke is heard, "For thee, Shireen!"
And echo fills the vales the ponderous hills between.
Nor rumour now is dumb, and statuaries arrive
To watch sublimest taste, observe each effort thrive;
For images deft grow within the fingers keen
Of him that ever moans and cries, "For thee, Shireen!"
Ah, gathers Khai Khosrau the guerdon may be claimed
And sends a messenger of purpose unashamed,
Who tells his noble foe, Shireen has sudden passed
To Paradise; that all in fearful woe are cast.
Once shrieks, swift suffers darkness, brief is still and then,
Leaps from a precipice Ferhad, quits human ken;
While King Khosrau at ease, exulting e'en at death,
Successful with the maid, basks in her scented breath.
Well was adorned the tale with grandeur and sweet sound
By great Nizami who, unfettered and unbound,

Dwelling in solitude had known the pangs of want,
To sycophancy's call remained as adamant;
Forthwith received such riches from his grateful prince
As helped him a true spirit epic to evince,
Laud the heroic Greek that eastward made his way
To distant Hindustan, caused Iran fierce dismay!

V

Singing of hapless lovers a pathetic song,
Soon the bard prosperous can reach a countless throng;
Give forth a tale of sadness in the desert air,
An Arab stripling's madness and a maid's despair
Foreshadowed from the moment they met first at school,
Lured by a fatal gladness unto love's hard rule.
For Leili the entrancing, crimson-cheeked and bright,
Swift with her tribe advancing, fled at hour of night,
Whom Májnun hastens after, constantly distraught,
Sighs for afar, down glancing, into peril brought.
His haughty sire invited parley, sore distressed,
By the tribe's chief was slighted, nay, with scorn addressed,
But Leili of the dark eyes heard of one scarce sane,
So from the tents affrighted by his fearful pain,
Among the palms would wander close to cooling streams,
In solitude wrapt ponder, oft indulge in dreams
She might on Májnun happen in that fragrant grove,
While ever she grew fonder, as fate 'gainst him strove.
Seldom a cypress quitting, mournfully she stays,
A prince attracts unwitting, who in eager praise

Of lips and fringing lashes, shapely form, unmasks
His wealth and station fitting, her in marriage asks.
But Májnun prospered newly, gained a chief as friend
Who could assist him truly, horsemen bravely lend
And spearmen, skilful archers, Leili's sire defied,
In fiercest battle duly broke the Bedween's pride.
Now can the nomad offer for the cruel flame
His daughter! even proffer his right arm to maim
Her body, for he rages, savage grows with dread
And at the thought a scoffer that she thus should wed.
To none his scheme is grateful and with glittering show
Unto a union hateful must the maiden go;
Unchanged, recalcitrant, within her parents' power,
Reaches in moment fateful, a lone prison tower.
Thoughts to her brain spring seething, for wild cries are heard
That the prince is not breathing, whereat she is stirred,
'Scapes to the green oasis, finds her lover's form,
With softest arms enwreathing, hides not passion's storm.
Májnun, the anguish-cloven, warns of Arab law,
Time's texture to be woven, slowly, without flaw;
Whence, back the maiden hapless to her prison goes,
Having affection proven, sinks beneath her woes.
But she had asked in sorrow he might view her grave,
So came he on the morrow (since her sire forgave)
Sighing and weeping, found some comfort 'midst his gloom,
Hoped soon at death to borrow space beside her tomb.

Then, Leili's page affected by hope's prompting deep,
Heavenward eyes directed in sweet visioned sleep,
Beheld her with a cup of diamonds past all price
With Májnun throned, elected e'en to Paradise!

VI

Soared variously, oft given to the higher thought,
Those to themselves and Persia satisfaction brought;
As Rumi, author of a mystic Sufist lore,
From Bosporus to Ganges, yet supplies its store.
Installed he dervishes whose dance symbolic tells
The motion of the spheres; in souls a rapture dwells!
Throve Sadi, the direct and caustic moralist,
Scholar and traveller, with eyes which nothing missed;
And Hafiz of unreined imagination warm,
Mingling tones mystical with charm of motion, form.
At last superlative, the poet Jami came,
In mountainous Herat won universal fame;
Maintained an ethic, yet, the tear-flood could compel,
Lacked never grace if wishful stories sweet to tell.

VII

Mortals encounter oft, ere bliss at last they know,
Trouble as of a whirlwind, devastating woe!
'Twas so with fair Zuléikha, as the moon sublime,
A royal Moorish damsel of the ancient time;
Who, in the land of dreams beheld a wondrous youth,
Of comeliness transcendent, radiating truth.
Waking, she sorely suffered that perceived him not;
Assumed an outward calmness though her heart was hot,

Sighed for return of night, e'en then did naught but moan,
Saddest at dawn remained, tearful because alone.
Now long being dolorous, ere she could view him more,
She then must ask his birth, and name forthwith implore.
Said Yusaf:—"Hast a wish, I should e'er think of thee?
Stay thou from other love than toward me surely free!"
Distracted grew Zuléikha, called on him aloud:—
"Wretched and tortured, I demand from thee so proud
To learn thy rank and home!" "Maid, I am Egypt's prince!"
Whereon, in happiness, she must her joy evince,
Speak with her friends of cities, so pronounce his name,
Or moan, with reddened eyes, till silence overcame.
Duly her sire decides in time that she should wed
And to a great alliance favourable be led;
Who would not marry one so beautiful as she?
Egypt's vizier doth thereto joyously agree.
Alas! far eastward sent in jewelled litter borne,
She feels for him but sudden disappointment, scorn;
Oft to the cornfields wanders, sighing for relief,
Or in the desert utters plaintive cries of grief.
In Canaan, far from Memphis, lived of Abram's breed,
A band of jealous brethren who a war decreed
Against their youngest; since oft of a dream he spake
Concerning the strange progress he at last would make.
Coming in council they contrived a subtle scheme,
On a false pretext luring into wilds extreme,

Entombed him in a pit, unto their father said,
A wolf had found him straying, on the corse had fed.
In vain the youth lamented, for his captors' ears
Heard naught, whose envy stunned him with its ribald jeers;
Wherefore, from Paradise, Gabriel flew and set
To the boy's fears an end, bringing an amulet.
Draws nigh a caravan, with wealth of merchants keen,
Who, on their camels riding, have the prisoner seen;
Learning he is a slave mild punished for a crime,
Must purchase, care for one that, in a happier time,
To the Vizier belongs, is to Zuléikha sent,
And of the household grows a special ornament.
'Tis Yusaf's very self! a treasure to be won!
A source of wonderment as wondrous as the sun!
Whom worshipping she shows the passion in her heart,
Yet suffers a rebuff, despite her utmost art.
True Yusaf loyally in all things would behave,
Even, when far advanced, long since no common slave,
Tearful recalls how trouble often was his lot,
Desires, through honest service, favour shall be got.
Flies he her presence, so she deems herself betrayed,
To Potiphar forthwith has accusation made;
Who bitter taunts the rebel, conduct 'twas most vile
To eat a master's salt, forthwith the dish defile!
Lo, Heaven brings about the culprit's swift release,
But then his wretched mistress, never finding peace
Once more must make him fiercely with her power acquaint,
Inflicts upon his beauty fetters, harsh restraint.
Alas! from out her presence vanished has the rose,
The cypress past compare, and dreadful loom her woes!

She must the prison watch, observe him prayerful kneel
A violet resigned, send forth this last appeal :—
" Love's cause, and ceaseless troubler of my fevered breast,
Take pity now on one with torment dire distressed ! "
And Yusaf heard the words as she, at fall of night,
Returning kissed his threshold, oft her love would plight ;
Yet never sign showed he though staying her chief law,
Whom to view, sent she one and kissed the eyes that saw,
While crying, since her cheek could touch not his dear shoe,
It should the messenger's that to him nearer drew.
Now Pharaoh, having dreamed, from his cupbearer heard,
Yusaf, interpreting, should tell the surest word ;
So to the captive sent, who scarce would silence break,
And wrongfully suspect, of his clear conscience spake.
Remorseful, then, Zuléikha freed him of his guilt,
Told, that in wretchedness she for his downfall built.
In lieu of Potiphar, who pines and swiftly dies,
Forthwith 'tis Yusaf's, as Vizier, to plan, advise ;
The while Zuléikha, blind, stricken with fearful needs,
Lists for his charger's step, beside her hut of reeds.
Oft prays she to an idol for return of sight,
Would know once more the glory of her Yusaf's might ;
Last breaks the voiceless image, purity regains,
Her soul, 'fore greatest God, of sinfulness arraigns.
Then Yusaf hears her praise and supplicating prayer,
Touched by such fearful woe, humility, despair,

Summons her unto him, in privacy full-learns,
The cause of her affliction is for him she yearns!
Swears he to pray for her; whereon the stricken form,
Made lovely once again and bright with colours warm,
This beauteous suppliant of tearful trembling soul,
Listens, hears Gabriel say she shall be wed and whole.
And now, 'midst splendid pomp, before the Pharaoh's Court,
She that in youth for love to Egypt had resort,
And through all harassments stayed e'er to Yusaf true,
Receives her utmost wish, can happiness renew.
Nor Yusaf fails to feel for her an equal flame,
Must press his lips to hers, an ardent love proclaim,
Makes her a place of prayer and lends a home and throne,
Where she may honour him, oft Heaven's goodness own.
As palms are fruitful, so Zuléikha generous bore;
And long blest lived till Yusaf dreamed to go before.
Cast she then o'er her tresses dust, and tore her face,
Stained with rich blood the earth, and asked, with God's good grace,
She might not stay to weep where Yusaf once had been,
Nor cumber more a world his beauty rare had seen.
O'ercome she drooped, and swooned; but he of Gabriel took
An apple, in his hand, and learned its scent and look,
Thus to the garden of Eternity was drawn;
And she that heard, alas! must wait for reason's dawn.
Sought she the hillock grave; black almonds threw thereon;
Lamented wildly one beneath, for ever gone;

Oft sighed and kissed the earth before her spirit passed,
Herself, a tear-washed blossom, in it soon was cast.
Fair Persia! wast a land to breed a folk intense
That loved religion, worshipped poesy's sweet sense!
Lo! Zoroaster's home, still in a manner thrives,
Amongst the ancient nations, lingers, brave survives!
While States by Menes, Sargon, Alexander ruled,
To nothingness are sunk, with force extinct or cooled.

HINDUSTAN

ANTIQUITY

As, it shall be where lofty hills abound,
A traveller turns, has viewed an area vast,
Discerned the valleys, loftier summits classed ;
So, through the epoch long which men have crowned,
They glorious traits in predecessors found,
At old beliefs and ways, eyes backward cast ;
Treasured the mighty thought of ages past,
And voices heard that e'en to-day resound.
'Midst battle endless, swayed conditions dire,
Yet victories came to help the intellect ;
Dearth never loomed of passions tempest-wrecked,
But lifted mists show hearts could still aspire,
The valiant faltered not, however checked,
Evincing greatness, shone with heavenly fire.

HINDUSTAN

I

A HUGE peninsula that southward points its form
As if to shield its errant child from tropic storm;
So early civilised and backward yet so late;
Ever in fear of gods held ceaseless in their hate
Of mild inhabitants; a land whose priestly caste
Has wielded empire immemorial and vast;
Famed for barbaric potentates who tedious ruled,
With glittering cruelty a timid people schooled;
That swelters 'neath an orb of rays oft pitiless,
O'erwhelmed is, too, by woes that make true happiness
A gift rare-known; as famine, flood and beasts which
fleet
From the near jungle leap, a dark and gloomy seat
Of wild ferocity; Ind is a gorgeous plant
Immoderately forced, whose beauty doth enchant;
Whose languid Eastern weakness causes it to stoop,
And fainting summon aid, lest it not merely droop
But pass.

II

This Hindustan, of blest fertility,
Sovereign powers of mind scarcely could fail to see
E'en in a distant age. In now unspoken tongue,
The Vedas, sacred books, preserve as early sung,
Hymns to great Váruná, god of the watery sky,
In whose benevolence man's hopes of welfare lie;

Discuss Creation's plan in tones sweet, vague but grand;
Who is the unknown God? repeatedly demand.
Such offer wisdom; more, incitement to good deed;
While from Puránas too as manifold proceed
Legend, historic tale, and mythic Mánu's laws
That preach hard penances and strivings without pause.

III

Here too are stored accounts of those divinities,
The gentle Hindu race has sought so long to please;—
Brahma, the self-existent one, of whom 'tis taught,
He could evoke this wondrous Universe from naught;
And Vishnu, the preserver, who to men gives aid,
Deigning to hear their prayers; oblations whom persuade.
He has incarnate been, so the great epic sings,
A warrior brave; but into life more famous springs
As Krishna, once proclaimed by shining vault-set star;
Of virgin birth and royal blood, was wide and far,
Is still adored. He miracles performed and last,
Met a sad fate; away, 'mid portents awful, passed
And rose again to save from sin.
A deity,
Of other kind is Siva, that new life sets free;
Presides o'er destinies of vital change and death;
Whose sway is absolute over the lightest breath.
Such starving devotees as rigid fix their limbs,
To satisfy austere self-mutilating whims,
Siva propitiate; every desire to quell
They wish; would so from gods obsequiousness compel!

IV

Since God is everywhere, never a Hindu good
Injures a serpent's life, would fear an' if he should.
No bane can wake his ire, for darkness dulls his sense;
Prostrated he will death welcome in mood intense.
A sacred kite has lived by holy priests preserved,
And worshippers devout adoring have been nerved
At sight of some great stone or hewn out "Siva" bull,
To offer solemn prayers, petitions sorrowful;
While in each special year into the blessed stream
Great throngs have plunged, the soul and body to redeem;
From plague or famine gaunt to save themselves oft went,
With gods in front high borne 'midst pomp magnificent!

V

Ever the East has been a home of mystic grace,
For feelings rapturous, a sure abiding-place,
Its faiths, philosophies and methods spiritual
And deities the needs of anxious men recall.
Lo, when great Cyrus bold in a strong Persia reigned,
A puissant raja's son other renown obtained
Holy Benares nigh; the mountain peaks seen whence,
Protest with pallid face against the sun's offence.
A life its mark could leave upon the world of man
And on his future hopes, romantic then began.
It chanced a satin-tree close to the river-side,
To travellers offered shade, wherein of a chaste bride,
Was born Siddartha Gáutama; a youth in turn
Feeling within his veins sweet fiery instincts burn,
Yásodharâ betrothed, and on a happy life
Without a cloud embarked, rich, with a beauteous wife.

And yet it came this prince, during those pleasant years,
Touched by the poorest cripple's misery to tears,
As next, by an ascetic whom he passing saw,
From child and spouse, ay all, could steel him to withdraw.
Loathing the Nautch and sinuous charm of dancing girls,
With vows he throws away his collar-string of pearls;
That as a wanderer, obtaining a chance crust,
He may shine forth, in time, a Buddha pure and just.
Nor tempter in the sky can over him prevail,
E'en promising as realm, the universe, doth fail.
Through vigils numerous, long penances and fasts,
Gáutama pristine joys ever behind him casts;
Still, it can be that home, affection, power and wealth
The victory nigh renew, once 'gain as 'twere by stealth.
Broken, he sits beneath a sheltering fig-tree's leaves,
Brief from a maiden's hands choice sustenance receives;
Then doubt and agony torture and rend his mind,
And leave him purified, a heaven in peace to find.

VI

Gáutama now no more would mortify the flesh,
Renouncing doctrines such, teaches in lieu a fresh
More wholesome creed:—the realm of righteousness as light,
Eternal rest for all that against ills would fight.
Man first, extreme and wide sorrows must recognise
And then revenge, impure desires sharp exorcise;
Next, vanquish ignorance and doubt, unkindliness,
Last, an abounding love and charity possess.

Gáutama knew on every side reigned deep belief,
The sins of past existence cause a present grief;
So taught that, life by life, man may retrieve past crime;
The best of men within of a brief life the time.
No sacrifice is needed, go-between required,
For goodly deeds can be by lofty thought inspired.
He gave a veritable "sermon of the mount,"
Warning against lust, rage, care, blindness as the fount
Of all is worst. Being asked, what had he done, reviled?
"Have held my peace," said Gáutama. "And struck?" "But smiled!"
"Yet, if men sought to slay?" "To die is scarce an ill."
A young girl bore to him her infant stiff and chill
And fain would fetch some herbs. "Bring but a mustard seed
From any house," said he, "whose inmates are agreed,
Within hath died nor parent, husband, son, nor slave;"
She searched, became forthwith Buddha's disciple brave!
Siddartha's wife, who gifts for her fond son must pray,
Was shown inheritance "which ne'er would fade away."
Last, Buddha dying, begged, as they did him revere
They should each other love, uphold the brethren dear.
Let them not, later, deem the Buddha truly gone;
Still was he there whom erst they had oft looked upon.
So lived and died good Gáutama; a doctrine preached
Which far and wide o'er Asia's continent has reached.
Truly the land is wondrous could a pearl produce
Of lustre unsurpassed yet fit for common use!

VII

But sensuous luxury held vicious courts in play,
The caste Brahmanical through Hindustan must sway.
In limpid air, 'neath azure skies, the high sun saw
Sculptures on temples huge of beauty without flaw,
Within which lofty stood, in strictest order placed,
Pillars and columns, often exquisitely traced;
While peaceful villages in direst poverty
Nestled beneath hillsides; or clash of steel caused glee
To well-accustomed ears of warlike mountain folk,
Far from close-packed bazaars and cities' galling yoke.

VIII

But one appeared whose name still many a man adores,
From fertile Volga's banks to Nipon's broken shores;
Small fragrant Southern isle to cold Siberian space:
Ásoká, pious king, the mightiest of his race.
This ruler of Behar, becoming convert true
Of Gáutama the good, did such a plan pursue,
As awhile riveted Buddha's enlightened code;
Yet never used therefor flame, sword, or lightest goad.
For he, full more than twenty centuries now sped,
By spiritual desire and lofty purpose led,
On rocks of far Pesháur inscribed in largest hand,
In nearer Gujerat, by blest Orissa's strand,
Clear upon pillars high, edicts at once so pure
And gloriously just that men now first felt sure,
While it morality to charity unites,
Religion can be freed from ceremonial rites.
Forbidding slavery, e'en cruelty to beasts,
Bloodshed of any kind, and sacrificial feasts;

Raising from chattel state, woman to equal rank
With man; dismissing tyrant caste of priests by frank
Sufficient methods new, Ásoká truly wrought
Such revolution vast in human modes of thought,
That we do benefit therefrom.
For surely he
O'erstepping Hindustan, sought widest liberty;
With Ptolemy of Alexandria the gay
And monarchs who o'er Greece and Syria held sway,
Through envoys unto close relationship would reach;
Sent missionaries afar, humanity to teach.
Ásoká's splendid name like an impartial sun
Westward should shed its rays as eastward it has done,
Since, well ere Heaven and fate in triumph could combine
To plant a saving creed in smallest Palestine;
While Greece and Egypt, Persia, India had possessed
Their cults and mysteries; a brave and manifest
Morality sublime, by such a prince was taught,
A Hindu emperor who, although at last he brought
Himself to life ascetic, still endures to-day
The king that earliest dared for the whole world to pray!

IX

Famous in legend, but of destiny forlorn,
A choice and goodly son to Ásoká was born:
Nor light of splendid jewel or triumphant skies
E'er equalled the sweet look of brave Kunála's eyes!
Still, loveliness as great to a stray hunter known
Was by a bird possessed, none other, it alone!
Alas, the queen had felt her step-son's subtle power:
Oft Rákshita in dolour would the glance devour

Of one that, seeing her, could yet indifferent stay,
From her resplendent charms incline his head away.
'Twas thus his downfall grew her all-consuming hope
Who prayed deep hell for him its portals wide would ope,
So when seemed Ásoká as if he soon would die
And Rákshita relieved his sickness skilfully,
She, by the king allowed whate'er might be her will,
Would reign for seven days and a dread scheme fulfil!
Alas! Kunála a rebellious town o'ercame,
Whither the queen swift sending in the monarch's name,
Ordered this son, as traitor, his bright orbs should lose,
To carry out which sin none would his strength misuse,
Until a hideous wretch at last performed the task,
Ay, well as Rákshita e'en at her worst could ask;
When all were stricken dumb, seeing such beauty lost,
Deplored the cowardliness a priceless glory cost!
Humbly Kunála bore him 'neath the awful stroke,
Calm and serene pronounced, he to a law awoke
Giving his mind but peace, unutterable joy,
Successfully his grief for ever could destroy.
Heard he, soon, Rákshita had brought on him his woe,
And natheless wished the queen a life-long bliss should know,
With his wife spake, remarking as men sow they reap;
As each is born to suffer, let her no more weep!
And next he strikes his viol, sings upon the road
Taking his weary steps unto the king's abode,
Who cannot deem this sightless beggar is his son,
Demands in fearful horror why the deed was done.

Now on the wicked falls a retribution meet,
Though, for their pardon, e'en Kunála can entreat
Who, for an act of sin in an existence past,
As he informs his sire, to agony was cast.
Once in a cave a hunter found on Himat's mount,
Sweet-eyed gazelles five hundred, gloating could each count
And prison them with nets; and since he would not lose
The food thus haply won, to blind them, lo, must choose!
Sure punishment befell! Throughout an era long
He must hell's torments suffer that had done the wrong,
And then existences five hundred slowly live,
In each, 'neath violence, his orbs to others give!
Then grown a master-craftsman pious, he restored
A monarch's shrine, knew hence birth-royal as reward;
Also designed a statue of mild Buddha wise,
As guerdon felt renewed the beauty of his eyes!
Ill acts, with goodly ones, have Karma for man built,
Who ever should reduce the balance of his guilt,
Must so a sequence of Ávatárs undergo,
Till winning dreamy peace, he shall Nirvána know!

X

But soon this gorgeous land preferred the Brahman creed
To that by Gáutama prescribed for human need;
For paths to fresh beliefs are apt to prove full steep,
When enterprise is slight or ignorance o'erdeep.
Ways immemorial, conventions slow amassed,
Not swift are set aside or to oblivion cast!

Could well a feeble race awed by the startling might
Of flood and plain and shore, mountain and Heavenly light,
Abjure the services of intercessors trained,
Erudite, or unread, by deity ordained?
Revoke such customs as protect from daily ills,
Give up the magic that sweet confidence distils?
Though philosophic faith souls philosophic binds,
A humble fetish oft accords with simple minds;
If it docility and narrowness impart,
It hinders Nature not from making kind the heart.
Nature that solves her problems in especial ways,
In Hindustan nor haste nor penitence displays!
And, yet, in broadest lands from China to Japan,
Buddha's enlightened faith has met the needs of man;
The while, concurrently, in a far-distant place,
Arose for humankind another means of grace,
Since sage and true Confucius sterling morals taught,
Still lacks not influence, though gods he never sought.

CATHAY

IMMUTABILITY

Let peach, narcissus surely mark the times,
Rare vases choice chrysanthemums reveal,
Strange gold-fish toward the gorgeous lotus steal,
In a rock-garden's space that Nature mimes!
Soothe must a faith (with thought Confucian chimes)
One should, as Buddha and Laotze, feel
Battle is base, though death can ever heal;
Perchance to nothingness man slowly climbs!
Classics shall teach how virtues to adore,
Since e'er immutability is best;
And stay revered the sire and ancestor,
All be repeated that was known of yore;
Neglected lapse no hallowed method lest
Cathay should yield unto an upstart West!

CATHAY

I

Upon new aspirants to national renown
A distant Orient people haughtily look down,
Knowing their early sires were western Tartars free,
Have often trumpeted an ancient pedigree;
To pass o'er which in silence now assured tempts;
Still, not to favour any method that exempts
From making mention of Yew-chaou-she, leader bold,
Who to form huts with boughs his pristine followers told;
And Suy-jui-she that drew the flame from tortured wood,
To note events and hours by cord-knots understood;
And Fuh-he who 'neath branches smouldering on the ground
A prize magnificent, e'en molten iron found;
And other welcome treasure happy chanced upon,
First showed with graphic words, act, thought, phenomenon;
Or Chinung, plant collector of the surest fame,
Or weaver first of silk, Selung-she, royal dame;
Whose consort Hwangte's skill induced the land to bloom,
Balmed is his memory yet, in a remotest tomb:
Passing o'er emperors old distinguished for a dark
Or fairer character, and doings that clear mark
The rise and fall inherent in the human scheme,
Allures it to approach a more illustrious theme!

II

Nigh to the southern shore which bounds the Ho-
ang-ho
And more, 'twould seem, than thrice eight centuries
ago,
Beneath a burning sun which sodden rice-fields warms,
Where many a yellow man his duty true performs,
Confucius dwelt and watched as a just governor,
High situate and great, who, without ceasing, bore
In mind his people's good. He pondered long and
deep
O'er why we joy, do well or ill, and haply weep;
Putting forth wisdom rich, sure read the human heart,
Announced aloud how men should play a worthy part.
Through life's impressive years, fondly he nourished
hope,
Uttering maxims thus, with wretchedness to cope:—
'Never another treat less admirably than
Thou wouldst indeed desire, ever, such fellow man
Should treat thyself. Give freely, staunch pursue the
right;
Act fittingly, for knowledge seek, ay, shine as light!
Since virtue comes with love of those have caused
our birth,
Always should offspring aim to feel their parents' worth,
Who are well worthy homage, e'en if they be dead,
Without them benefits of no sort had been bred!
Annuls the smallness of good actions not their
charm,
Evil, though slight it be, must ever work for harm;
All should avoid excess of pleasure, will or pride,
And none from conscience' call in freedom e'er abide!'

So, true to his ideals, the mighty sage must preach,
Would wisdom inculcate, prudence in one and each,
Contrast before the mind the lofty and the mean,
Implore men, from his thought, advantages to glean.
Too, found he rules minute for many a class and stage
Which could excite his powers, or zealous soul engage,
As children's nurture, or behaviour of the old,
Men's manners various and bearing warm or cold.
Deeming the Empire's customs shone no more sublime,
He praised especially the past and ancient time;
Set skilful writers far in history's paths to seek,
And some of arts and laws, medicine, science speak.
Lavishing stimulus on things of intellect,
And drawing from the cultured henceforth e'er respect,
Urging upon mankind, they should pursue the good
Even as arduously as any coarser food,
He tasted disesteem before his life was done;
Next an illustrious fame, immortal glory won,
To whom yet emperors great extend obeisance low,
With yearly sacrifice homage devoutest show.

III

Soon one arrived that deemed mere letters should not tower:
Ruler Che-hwangti must assault their noble power;
Ruthlessly books despatched to the consuming flame,
The reign of scholars fine with cruelty o'ercame.
But followed on such sudden devastating blight
Fresh means of ministering to men's increased delight,
For tablets of bamboo gave way to silk close wove
Whereon a pencil soft at liberty could rove.

And artists felt impelled on such a medium fit
To prove a subtlety if strange yet exquisite;
Till, while the years produced dynasties not unkind,
The thought of paper came, made from trees' inner rind.
Too (nigh when good Augustine pagan England schooled),
True printing to prepare, considerately 'twas ruled
Engraven blocks of wood should hint to men a force
Of future potency. And then with fine resource,
An ironworker rude, neglecting not his chance,
Showed with type movable the Orient could advance.
Which change conduced Confucius' influence to renew,
Helped the enlightenment to classic writings due:
A sage who worshipped effort, every man's, the State's
(But thought o'er much of all to ancestors relates),
Differing from a rival mystical that dreamed,
Spake of a natural way, as to him it seemed.

IV

'Twas Honan, mountainous arrayed with forests rich
Trained, in a hamlet small, Laotze for a niche
In fame's eternal temple; who 'ere long became
Maintainer of the books stamped with the royal name;
Much meditating, last, composed for friends a work
Wherein ideas profound and philosophic lurk;
Grew next dissatisfied, from human ken withdrew,
'Twas said, upon an ox soared heavenward from view.
Advise his apophthegms a resignation pure,
That energy is error, trenchantly assure,

Oft urge men, in existence motiveless and free,
To cull contentedness from chaste simplicity.
For the compassionate, those hating to be first,
That recklessness abhor, he was at heart athirst.
To count the high as low and deem the great as small,
Seeking a foe, with kisses, on his neck to fall,
Submissively receive what day or hour may bring,
Behold mild principles Laotze loved to sing!
Governors should, he deemed, e'er damp men's secret fires,
Study supplies and stay inordinate desires;
But he especial taught and most assured felt,
There is a "tao" vague that has with all things dealt,
A strange spontaneous reason and directing word
By which e'er subtily, man and the world are stirred.
And his philosophy could gain adherence wide,
Quickens a faith distinct wherein a few abide!
Still lives the essence of the taoist belief
By wealth and cloth upheld, also a pope in chief:
Ethics are kept in view, reward and punishment;
Yet, most it comes about, the priests their day have spent
Viewing an open page to learn the will divine
By noting if occurs a whole or broken line;
Or they can fortunes tell, establish lucky days
With compass or strange signs set in a cobweb maze:
Zealous in alchemy's ambitious empty strife,
Would find a magic cure fraught with eternal life!

V

Surely a hundred times since China blest the morn
A generation new of mortals has been born:

It doth accentuate old customs and delights
To use, three thousand years, the self-same book of rites!
Has come no alphabet where words are shown by sign,
And eyes advance from top to bottom of the line;
Nor welcome day of rest relieves the weekly round;
Nor has a city 'scaped levelling to the ground,
Bred it a parricide. And there the ancestor
Is worshipped as a god, and husbands still abhor
That wives should walk with ease; alas, oft babes new-born
By wretched poverty from longing arms are torn;
And maidens seldom know love's tenderest caress,
Superior man still dons the skirted silken dress,
And rulers liking not the century more free,
With lesser sixty years mark languid time's decree.
There, hate of aught is strange has been a faith so fast,
Scarcely the race has changed; as it was first, 'tis last.

VI

Still, in such land remote, Nature evinced her power,
Could revel in the freedom of an early hour,
Must spur a strenuous folk isolate to succeed,
Aspire to build an empire, arts superior breed;
Make use of qualities having intrinsic force
Sufficient, everywhere, to prove a vast resource.
See then a spot unhelped by thought of such a cast
As the Athenians, Romans unto moderns passed;
Where scholars have been wont to banish from their view
As base and heretic and impious the new;
Where once a year the father, with his joyous throng,
Offers gifts dutiful, that to the dead belong;

Where vital energies have followed channels old
Because a sage had taught 'tis sinful to be bold.
Where ever-restless spirits haunt the very soil,
From whose fell influence all shuddering recoil;
So that men dread to use the wealth 'neath stone and pine,
To earth-diviners awe and reverence assign;
Where taxes are secured by methods primitive
Of mandarins who hint 'tis safer free to give,
And order oft is kept upon a stringent plan
Making one answerable if sins another man;
Where to keep dignity from well-deserved disgrace
The rich can bribe the poor to suffer in their place;
Where bride and bridegroom first regard them when they wed,
Yet none the less, indeed, true happiness have bred;
There, a good humour subtle upward seems to spring,
Aids to o'ercome despair and brave endurance bring;
There on the path or stage the actor care beguiles,
Summons to merriment and ever-ready smiles,
Asking the tragic muse for puissance generous
Or, from the comic, gains an inspiration, thus:—

VII

A sapient doctor in most mighty magic skilled,
Sir Serious, yclept, with wonderment is filled
When, on a walk, he views a widow fan a grave,
Ventures to seek the reason she can so behave,
Learns to the dead she swore from further bliss to fly
Until the glistening surface of his tomb be dry.
Relates Sir Serious soon unto his wife the tale,
Who scornfully denies such vileness could prevail;

Protesting tender honour for her dearest lord
Would keep her from such thought of treachery abhorred.
Lo, vanishes the husband; and a handsome youth
Appearing seeks instruction in some hidden truth;
Permitted is to stay, since lodgings there are few,
And an old servant deems that favours should ensue.
The scholar dallies, hopes the sage will come again;
Dislikes all idleness, and while he waits in vain,
Through glances amorous and frequent endless sighs,
Reaches the understanding eager lovers prize.
So nuptials occur and stand the pair alone,
When sudden falls the bridegroom, swoons with a strange groan.
Now, 'midst a scene of anguish, the good nurse suggests
From one that wrapt in cerements in the mansion rests,
Forth shall the heart be plucked her master new to heal;
Whereat the dame must boldly to Sir Serious steal,
Who, yawning, sorrows deeply he has slumbered long
Nor grieves she finds him gone that did with her the wrong,
Then lifts against herself a sharp and glittering knife,
Fearing in shame to stay a learned wizard's wife!
Forward Sir Serious steps and vigorous must warn
All husbands losing helpmates; let them never mourn;
Would one desire to think his wife another's pride?
Leave children for a stranger pitiless to chide?
Endure his wealth's departure to another's care?
So the bereaved should pause, of further bonds beware!

VIII

Cheerful and temperate, frugal has lived this folk,
Careful and docile, bland, disposed to toil's hard yoke,
Keen in affairs of life, nor slow to comprehend
It may expedient prove to borrow, ay, or lend,
Disposed through games of chance, or poppy's baleful juice,
Amid monotony crass joys to introduce.
Of ruthless governance and ancient laws severe,
Of hideous gods and hells many have moved in fear;
Yet, by pagodas high, shorn Buddhist monks have dwelt,
Now meditated, sung, now solemn prayerful knelt;
Proving that, east and west, man's nature is the same,
Fain would he upward look, avoiding Heaven's blame!

NIPON

THE UNAWAITED

As when, perchance, one sparkling not in youth,
Unnoticed long, at last awakes surprise,
Since, in his manhood, lo! he glitters wise
And famous, that at first seemed dull, uncouth;
So a strange nation, far from Western truth,
Forsaking ancient wont, can swiftly rise,
Though lacking once, as seen of jaundiced eyes,
A proper meed of thought, religion, ruth.
Who turns his thought to things and doings known
And, next, the future scans, a valiant seer,
Is surely forced within his heart to own,
With months and days, fresh auguries appear,
Traits scarce expected thrive, ay, greatness rear,
As if hid causes' puissance to enthrone!

NIPON

I

Far islanders of late with suddenness renowned,
Adjacent to Cathay a battle spot have found
And triumphed valiantly. Truly for long such folk
Conserving all was dear, must their god-emperor cloak,
As from the aweless gaze and over-daring eye
Of curious foreigners; him guard with jealousy!
No strangers coming near should look or prying steal,
Land of the rising Sun, on one that ruled thy weal!
Lo! Nipon, ocean gem and solitary State,
Aloof, by intercourse little contaminate,
Honouring ancestors and loving Nature's cult
Yet learning soon in mildest Buddha to exult,
Became devoted to an older empire's lore,
The arts and letters of a vast and neighbouring shore;
Advanced and grew possessed of many a happy taste,
While sluggish Europe slept, or energies could waste.

II

E'en during distant times by ne'er a cloud obscured
When Heaven's son enjoyed a tranquil reign assured;
While isolation's boon, with soft luxurious ease,
Impelled the mighty every passion to appease;
One, Murasaki, sought to draw Kyôto's life,
And thus romantic limned ambitions oft were rife:—
An emperor's son, o'er-apt to gaze in beauty's eyes,
Deeming a hermit might his ague exorcise,

Travelled at early dawn; still, cherry-blossoms found
Within the shadowy glades of pine-clad mountain ground.
Reaching with toil, on high, a wild and rocky cave,
He drank a magic draught which the ascetic gave;
Soon, in a garden fair, perceived a little maid,
Tearful because her sparrow from its basket strayed,
Nigh whom, a comely nun set flowers before a shrine,
And turning, chid the weeper, bid her not repine,
That in response her head with shining dark locks bent,
Earning Prince Genji's love by a look penitent.
Sorely he wished, who saw the winsome lonely child,
Her guardian to become, therefore a nurse beguiled;
Though held the watchful nun, with instinct womanly,
A mountain violet so youthful should stay free.
Now came his servants near and, by a small cascade,
Tasted sweet saké, then on flutes harmonious played;
Till Genji, downward stepping, sought at last his bride,
The lady Hollyhock, cold, seldom at his side.
But e'er inclined to roam, he to Wistaria turned,
A princess for his love with gentle passion burned;
Yet must he couplets send unto the mountain height,
Tell of an inner flame, undimmed, exceeding bright;
Too, saw he Violet, while chanced a fearful storm,
Mild spake and comforted her slender clinging form;
Last, with her nurse devised a plan to win the day,
Arrived with servants, bore the little maid away;
In a secluded portion of his mansion grand,
Bade her with toys and playmates sadness brave withstand.

Such a fine prince with ease can penetrate each bower,
Melodiously address the princess Saffron-flower,
Who, at her open casement, listening to his lute,
Touched by his ardour, cannot well his sway dispute.
Come festal days and dances, games, disguises faint,
Verses on fans exchanged, with feelings to acquaint;
Yet Genji loves his captive; eyes her fingers small
As they the pencil move, or pensive air recall.
Lo, when his virtuous wife, beneath some secret breath
Cured by no priestly spell, becomes a prey to death,
Impetuous, he seeks love in a royal place,
Is banished, exiled, must accept with fickle grace
Diminished happiness! Still, years and falling leaves
Subtly the conscience smite of one with joy receives
A pardoning messenger.
And now he hastens swift
To view the Violet who may his mood uplift;
Tells of his distant deeds, how he has tasted bliss,
But is forgiven, then bestows and wins a kiss;
So Genji mates again, would lightest ways forsake,
Regrets his years ill-spent, can for the future quake!
Thus could an ancient writer show her skilful bent,
Illumine customs old, betray soft sentiment.

III

Unto the land where Fusiyama's cone exact
Doth, oft, sun-worshippers in vesture white attract
To prayer at early morn, a mount men rapt admire
'Mid glorious charms of earth and sky and sea that tire
Conceivably no soul; where huge Dai-butsus rise,
Of mien beneficent, with tender, dreamy eyes,

Regarding those who peach-trees for sweet blossoms
rear
And e'er a newly-petalled gorgeousness hold dear;
Came, to cure feebleness, a military caste
Dominant item of a feudal system vast.
So, where the Earth is fairest, fiercely Daimyos
sought
To wield the Shogun's might, oft bloody battles
fought;
While weak Mikados sank, and such enjoyed command
As could their rivals smite and doughty blows with-
stand!

IV

The mass of men were serfs but asking fields to till
Or bowing low before some haughty noble's will;
Except the Samurai, a famous folk and brave
Proud warriors who proof of wondrous virtues gave.
For, of a firmly fixed and native excellence,
Their Bushido became a faith and strong defence,
Assisted love ancestral, as by Shinto creed
And sages inculcate; sound principles doth breed.
Which Samurai were true to Daimyos and the
State,
Strong and magnanimous, patient, with right elate!
They cried, above all else, loom honourable deeds;
To gain respect, a child should think not of his
needs.
Come next the qualities of justice, rectitude;
No wavering should spoil, nor halting mind exclude
What reason says is sound. To 'stablish right, e'en
die!
Though blows are ever less than moral bravery.

As for the truth in vogue 'mongst hucksters and the base,
Assigned these warriors thereto a sorry place,
But praised benevolence, wherein sure virtue lies,
Held knowledge of less worth than thoughts and actions wise;
Still was not courtesy their noble code above
Which kept its highest praise for mercy, as for love.
A rule of morals rare! cheering and strengthening those
Whose confidence in man's intrinsic goodness grows
On shores but yester dared from feudalism disarm,
'Midst an increasing might, retain a dainty charm!

PART II

THE MEDITERRANEAN

HELLAS

ART

Who, seeking far from dreary paths to climb,
Would softer moods through strings or reeds display,
Or using colour, form, men's feelings sway,
Knows that of forces longing is the prime.
Who loves to show in song the worth of rhyme,
Or, blest, his works in columned tiers survey,
Or summon life to marble from the clay,
Persistent soars, rejects not the sublime.
Art would loom flawless, zealous to achieve,
Can many faithful worshippers enrol;
Desireth joys should make the stricken whole;
Pining great truths from Nature to receive,
And e'er ambitious beauty's net to weave,
Shall capture, ay eternally, the soul!

HELLAS

Now summon lingering glances to far places cast,
For strange is Hellas's story and of interest vast!
Unearthed at ancient Cnossos, after toil severe,
Rich palaces and treasures numerous make clear,
Man throve of old in Crete, the mild and isolate,
Advancing, into realms of art could penetrate,
Till upon neighbouring shores, as destiny decreed,
His drama should develop, to fresh triumphs lead.

I

Uranus, Cronos, Jove! from grandsire unto son!
'Twas by the first (the Heavens) begetting was begun;
As Hesiod proclaims, a herdsman in his youth
Who, nigh mount Helicon, in song reveals the truth;
Tells that primeval Chaos a fresh aspect wears,
With Earth and Tartarus and Love existence shares,
Evokes dark Night, which breeds at once the Light and Day,
While Earth produces Sea and Sky of starred array.
But Earth and Heavens wed and progeny regard
Whom soon sire Uranus in Tartarus has barred,
Till Cronos him o'ercomes, when from the mangled dead
Giants or Furies, sea-nymphs beautiful are bred;
Nay, when the god's remains have mingled with the foam,
Springs glorious Aphrodite forth from such a home.

Next, Cronos suffers vengeance, into duress falls,
And mighty Jove himself Olympus' monarch calls,
Stupendously contests against the Titan host
That on Thessalian Othrys southerly them post.
Immortal gods, ere long, caused to live mortal men
Of gold at first, next silver, brass soon, heroes then;
And though, perchance, these scarce forthwith the gods annoyed,
(They died e'er pleasantly and breathed of care devoid)
Such have at times incurred a meed of Heavenly hate,
O'er-warlike, quarrelsome, well merited their fate,
Till last an iron race fills impiously the world,
Is e'en to parents harsh, shall pass towards evils hurled!
For Jove, admonishing with thunderbolts to awe,
Showing his heart oft moved by passion's tireless law,
Save when from Heaven he glanced and deigned on Earth to love,
Evinced but seldom mildness from the heights above.
Thus, when Iapetus took to his side as wife
An Oceanid fair-ankled, and had given life
To brave Prometheus who, being a king, decides
What honour Jove deserves, the sacrifice divides
Before a contest 'twixt the gods and mortals weak,
Can set the flesh 'neath refuse, so that Jove shall seek
A heap of bones fat-covered! then disaster falls,
For the god, wrathful, fire from human use recalls!
Once more Prometheus slily strives for mortals' need,
Snatches the lambent flame, conceals it in a reed,
Is sentenced to remain unto a pillar chained,
Must by a cruel eagle endlessly be pained

That, with extended wings, desists not from its task,
E'er gnaws because the culprit will not pardon ask.
Scarcely choleric Jove forgives inferior man,
Bids Vulcan carefully a novel creature plan
Of earth and water mingled, deftly such endue
With a man's strength and voice, a goddess' shape and hue.
Next must Minerva give this form a robe of white,
A wondrous broidered veil; and soon to toil incite;
Adds Aphrodite grace and passionate desire,
Itself a woe; sends cares that cause the limbs to tire;
While Pallas a rich garland places on the head,
Drawing together blossoms in the meadows spread;
Last Mercury at woman takes unkindly aim,
Endows with winning manners, mind bereft of shame.
Stands forth Pandora, now sure to distribute ills
And mischiefs wounding man, a mighty part fulfils;
Since, though Prometheus sagely would the maid reject;
His brother weak and foolish cannot well be checked,
Progenitor becomes of all the human race,
E'en of the heroes whom our present folk replace.

II

'Twas in a distant age Mycenæ's grandeur rose,
When the brave Greeks attacking doughty Trojan foes,
By dint of shining deeds visionless Homer spurred
To win a mighty triumph countless minds has stirred.
For he sang gloriously the records of a past
Which witnessed human life by fierceness overcast,
And credence gave to gods that in men's actions played
A part whose magnitude threw mortals in the shade;

Lo! Thetis, Jove, Apollo would the host undo
That only Juno's and Minerva's kindness knew!
When Paris, the alluring, with his beauty smote
Fair Helen's fancy, led her unto Troy remote,
Then Agamemnon, king, struck at such city famed,
Because its ruler's son with passion had inflamed
A wife for other could than Meneläus long,
And Agamemnon would avenge his brother's wrong.
But soon he made a priestess object of desire,
Occasioned to the Greeks swift retribution dire;
Apollo brooking not an insult thus intense,
And launching 'mongst their host a hideous pestilence.
Some, moved by proud Achilles, cursed the impious deed;
Wherefore to restitution late the king agreed,
Yet on condition that Achilles did him spare,
As recompense, a special captive maiden fair.
Hid not Achilles, then, his turbulence of heart,
Ceded such treasure but designed the Greeks should smart;
And, though he yielded her that 'neath his care had lain,
He promised ne'er by him should Trojan more be slain!
Should Helen first bring strife, who late from Sparta went,
And now Briseis sweet be stolen from the tent
Of such a chief as he, merely to satiate
The lust of one had sinned, fresh evil would create?
The son of Peleus swore, not as a craven tame
Would he submit that men should glory in his shame;
More, when they fetched the maid, he nursed a sullen ire
And, with his soul attacked by a consuming fire,

Addressed his mother Thetis whence the tale reached
Jove,
Who, pleasing his erst flame, 'gainst Agamemnon
strove,
Woke in him, through false dreams, excessive con-
fidence
In his men's loyalty and martial excellence.

III

The monarch, hot for strife, presumes his host to
test;
Dares to propose that all from war's alarms shall
rest!
And finds, dismayed, his plans come near to an eclipse,
Since joyfully his troops retiring seek their ships!
Then Juno, queen of Heaven, feeling 'gainst Thetis
spite,
Desires Minerva shall allure the Greeks to fight;
Wherefore Ulysses soon upbraids the troops outworn,
Alters their attitude, through show of force or
scorn.
But what shall be their course, who wellnigh are
afraid
To make e'en ventures small without Achilles' aid?
Cretan Idomeneus, Nestor, Ulysses sage,
Stern Menelaüs, Ajax great and less, engage
In council with the king. He to Jove offers prayer,
Nor omen clear obtains, nor sign of Heaven's care;
Yet, having sacrificed, straightway his forces moves
In silence toward a foe, that contrarily approves
Loud shouts and clashing din. Now all the word
await
To strive for victory and satisfy deep hate.

IV

Then Paris, in his beauty glowing like a god,
The intervening space betwixt the armies trod;
Though, soon as Meneläus from his chariot leapt,
Alas! the challenger a-sudden backwards stept,
From his chief, Hector, drew a sharp and stinging word,
So to the conflict late, was fortunately stirred;
Wherefore the briefest truce is suddenly declared
And for the fighters twain the lists are well prepared.
When was a battle-prize more fraught with every charm
Than she 'gainst whom no Trojan e'er desired harm?
Sad Helen writes her life in tapestry's bright tale,
Till Heaven bids her watch which champion shall prevail;
Whereon a tower she climbs, to anxious Priam shows
The king and her just lord and others that oppose
The chivalry of Troy. What sadness then she felt
That on her friends of yore with word and gesture dwelt!
Afar recline the Greeks, to horses, chariots near,
But soon the lots decide which first shall case the spear.
Lo! Paris fails to pierce the adverse bull's-hide shield,
Too, Meneläus' lance a poor result can yield;
Who, raging that his weapon falters in its course,
His adversary seizes, toward the Greeks would force,
Dragging with sinews tense the helmet's horsehair crest,
Till sudden snaps a band the shapely throat has pressed.

For Venus will not let her favourite be slain !
In mist to Helen's chamber leads the luckless swain,
Who, bitterly reproached because of his defeat,
Is finally received to wonted joys complete.
Yet white-armed Juno, meaning Trojans oft shall die,
Pleads with great Jove for right her rage to satisfy
And cunning sends Minerva subtly to induce
One of the hated force unfair to break the truce.
'Tis bowman Pandarus, being lured to try his skill,
Sheltered behind his friends would Meneläus kill ;
Which act of treachery rouses the Greeks, alarms,
And ranges each for instant fresh recourse to arms ;
So countless combatants sink stricken amid cries
That, mingling in a roar, to vaulted Heaven rise !
Full many a shaft is winged through skull-bones or broad chest ;
Deeds terrible are done to win bright armour blest !
Arrives success entire to princely Diomede,
Till, with an arrow sharp, Pandarus makes him bleed
Whom kind Minerva cures ! None gives the archer aid
As horror-struck he seeks due vengeance to evade ;
Dreadfully perishes, since Diomede the fierce
Transfixing 'neath the eye, both tongue and teeth can pierce.
Nor spared he Venus e'en (when to her son she flew),
First smote Æneas, next, gore from the mother drew
Who in Olympus plained ; there, heard the death foretold
Of one against a goddess had been overbold.
Now must come Mars to mend the Trojans' sorry plight,
But, through Minerva's help such god is put to flight

By Diomede, that yet proves not to all unkind,
From Glaucus turns away, since ancient ties them bind.

V

Albeit, Hector asked the matrons, noway dumb,
To crave of Pallas she should Diomede o'ercome;
Next, drew the dallying Paris sharp from Helen's side
And, pondering an attempt to stem the battle's tide,
Said farewell to his wife, Andromache the good,
Fondled his infant and was scarcely understood,
Yet never yielded to their dear allurements soft,
Valiant of attitude, at all but valour scoffed.
Thus the illustrious Trojan hies him to the fight,
Knows sinking at his heart but steadfast must do right,
Demands to meet forthwith in single combat dire,
Any brave Greek that shall to peril still aspire.
And when huge Ajax steps the lots to vindicate,
Against him Hector strives until, the hour being late,
Stern heralds intervene. Now are exchanged the gifts
Which warriors please: a form of courtesy uplifts!
A truce permits to burn the slow-collected dead,
And then the Greeks retreat, sorely dispirited;
Natheless entrench themselves, and since kind fate allows
To gain a load of wine, they feast and long carouse.
Meanwhile Olympus hears great Jove a council call,
Forbid gods, goddesses to deal with men at all;
Lightnings he sends the Greeks, to indicate a frown,
Even a thunderbolt 'fore Diomede hurls down;
So offerings despite, they stay but ill at ease,
Succeed not in their hope the great one to appease.
In vain skilled Agamemnon, Meneläus strive,
They nor can victory win nor triumph slight contrive.

True, Teucer with his bow many a Trojan slays,
Shines forth supreme till Hector puissant force displays.
Who hurls a mighty rock, the archer's shoulder breaks,
So of hue desperate the Greeks' suspense partakes,
By whom, their vessel near, a woeful night is passed,
Invaders as they are, behind their walls aghast.
But burn a thousand fires on the defenders' plain,
While fifty men at each swear freedom to regain!

VI

Ere long the Argive host, with heralds and parade,
Through special deputies, desire Achilles' aid,
Who, courteous, with roast meats and the enticing bowl,
Welcoming them must hear a tale should move his soul;
Still lets no promised wealth immense his heart allure,
Nor beauty of Briseis yet untouched and pure;
Neither himself will go nor friend Patroclus send
To lead the Myrmidons and fate's disfavours end.
Nay, more, he shows his mind when fighting is renewed,
Must, in his henchman's person, on the scene intrude;
Rejoices retribution now seems close at hand,
Learns Agamemnon, failing onslaught to withstand,
By son of Antenor is wounded with a spear,
Whilst Diomede is stung by winged shafts severe.
Rigidly Hector holds that valour ne'er can err;
No monstrous omen should the stout of heart deter!
Thus seeing a bold eagle bitten by a snake,
He scorns contemptuously a presage dark to take
And leaps a bloody ditch and reddened palisade,
Arrives audacious, finds the shipmen sore afraid.

But ox-eyed Juno now has lulled her lord to sleep,
And Neptune helps the Greeks defeat away to keep,
Garbed as a solemn seer, can animate their souls,
Brings them a welcome skill, largely their might controls.
Heaves Ajax a vast stone straightway at Hector's breast,
Who thus is forced, at last, low in the mire to rest;
Where doubtless he had lain, ne'er more the sweet air breathed,
But that the Sun-god wills Troy's laurels freshly wreathed,
Before it is too late, the soul to life recalls,
Presses so heavily on the Achæans' walls
That Trojans, foot and chariot, nigh the galleys swarm,
Minding no strokes of Ajax, swiftly, bravely storm!

VII

Patroclus at the sight, hastes to Achilles, weeps;
Fails of effect, so in his master's armour leaps,
Forth leads the Myrmidons, the Trojans' hearts to daunt,
Who guess not one thus dares another's part to vaunt.
But, aided by Apollo, Hector strikes him down
Of character unstained and loftiest renown,
Whose corse, with peril being unto Achilles brought,
Inspires to swift revenge, banishes other thought.
Then Heaven's armourer majestic harness makes,
A shield whose splendid art still interest deep awakes;
With which rich panoply the chieftain must prevail,
And hastens, buoyed by it, the Trojans to assail.
Mounting a warrior's car drawn by immortal steeds,
And smiting pitiless if anyone impedes,

Achilles judges all are fled or overthrown,
Save that, without Troy's gates, now Hector stands alone;
Who flying is pursued the city's walls around,
Until by stratagem Pallas can such confound,
Induce at last to pause, for home and honour strike
And find his foeman's shield all other shields unlike!
Cleaving a harness joint, him soon Achilles slays
And callous, to the camp the gallant corse conveys,
Savagely gluts thereon deep hate with proofs of scorn,
Till after many days much anger being outworn,
He renders up the form of one that slew a friend,
Since aged Priam dares with ransom rich attend,
Trembling would see once more his mangled offspring's face,
Spurred by affection, will the royal pride abase.
Ere long, Patroclus' rites reveal archaic truths,
As when Achilles slays Trojans, twelve captive youths,
And sacrifices beeves and leads around the pyre
All that are prompted by a revèrent desire.
But Troy, nigh Hector's body, sounds of grieving hears,
While Helen, miserable, laments, with saddest tears,
The loss of one had shown oft kindliness of heart
To her whom death now left desolate and apart.
Awaiting a return unto their native land,
Forthwith the Greeks hold sports and games upon the strand;
Concerning whom strange fate has formed a high resolve,
Ambitiously desires to view a race evolve
Of shining qualities suitable to a gem
Magnificent and new in Nature's diadem.

VIII

Exalt were Hellas' sons, recalling oft their birth
From such as breathed when gods controlled affairs of Earth!
Willed they in gratitude Apollo to revere
And Jove omnipotent; shrines sumptuous would rear
Determined specially to breed a race for war,
Thus used the virile lads whom Sparta's mothers bore,
Where youths were suffering taught and maids must run and leap,
All would encourage toil and minds from learning keep.
But different wont arose, since close, if otherwhere,
Athenians treasured fancies, strength for art could spare,
Remained in readiness, when stirred by great events,
To blossom forth and gleam Earth's brightest ornaments.
Ancient surpassing Greece, thy mountains, plains and shores
Still offer memories which all the world adores,
As of Olympus, where lived deities in bliss,
Thermopylæ's brave pass, triumphant Salamis!
Thy children loved the true, the beautiful and good,
Worshipped the body's health, the mind's well understood
So prowess would induce by festivals and sports,
Intelligence at schools, philosophers' resorts;
Raising on sunny hills the olive and the vine;
Saw to it in the cities varied art should shine!
Thus never melancholy into a system came
Whose rule was skilfulness and vigour to acclaim.

Masterly, dexterous, this small yet glorious land
Reared those who Persians could successfully withstand;
Evinced in many a way the part men were to fill
As the exponents of a lofty Cosmic will.
To rhetoric their tongue a lucid grandeur gave,
Allured with eloquence as flowing as the wave;
Never the ear a purer melody has known,
Nor, surer, lips succeeded reason to enthrone.
Averse from lethargy and ever prone to speech,
Greeks strenuous discussed, perfection's plan would reach;
E'er sought the utmost from a leader to exact,
Yet eagerly remarked on qualities he lacked;
Omitted not to search for something should displease
E'en in their paragon the famous Pericles:
Ensample of his age, high representative
Of finest traits that in a supple race could live.

IX

A suspect, since his fathers had abused their power
And fortune failed not on him favours rich to shower;
This statesman, having learned of Zeno subtlety,
By Anaxagoras been led to sympathy,
Can overcome old customs with his silvery word,
Distribute benefits among the common herd.
For the Athenians he with resolution strives;
Rewards for faithful citizenship contrives
Such as the brave deserve who ne'er from war recoil,
Or, in the judgment hall, as jurors steadfast toil;
Lets not the penniless sad from the theatre turn
Where they may honest virtues, Heaven's justice learn.

Observes he now o'erjoyed the Parthenon's emprise,
By Pheidias often standing sates his beaming eyes,
And, zealous for rich glories upon such a shore,
Can gold for chaste Athena, ivory forth pour,
Ravished to think, anigh the statues' flesh-tint warm,
The men of Athens gaze on art and perfect form!
Fortunate in his tastes, he other minds would please,
Zealously all occasions for their welfare seize;
So loving melody, must contests institute,
View emulous performers on the harp or flute.
In statecraft's troubled field, too, Pericles can shine,
Even the varied arts of peace and strife combine;
Thus, seeking wealth wherewith the city to expand,
He, for the general good, employs with lavish hand
War tributes from the States whom Athens should protect,
Deems that she does her part, in no way should be checked!
This ready orator can thundering declaim,
Or argue subtily, but e'er opponents tame;
Must on the bloody field of Tanagra fierce strive
As if no hardy Spartan should remain alive!
Or, in command, a vast activity displays,
Advancing with his fleet past rocky coasts and bays,
Restores the oracle to those its care should know
At Delphi's sacred fane beneath Parnassus' snow;
Skirting Achaia's shores, at Acarnania strikes,
E'en on far Euxine sets the governance he likes.
Too, upon Samos' strand in anger he descends,
Hard smiting, shrewd assistance to Miletus lends,
Whence had come one who stayed his constant solace bright,
Aspasia beautiful, sweet lady erudite.

Within the home she welcomed e'er the sage and skilled
As Socrates the keen, what hour fate Athens filled
With sculptors deft, rapt poets, dramatists renowned,
Artists, astronomers and reasoners profound;
When even history rose, and medicine had its birth,
And minds majestic soared as ne'er before on Earth!

X

But fickle destiny hatches colossal grief,
Favours no more, must frown on Athens and her chief,
Embroil in feuds which Corinth with Corcyra waged,
Arouse dire jealousy till war with Sparta raged.
Deftly can Pericles scheme for resistance sure,
Restrain the men of Athens, make the walls secure;
Nor notices complaints of action incomplete,
But reaps the benefit of a transcendent fleet,
Despoils Ægina's isle, and Megara lays waste,
Lets Lacedæmon's coast his shipmen's prowess taste.
Alas, such gallant deeds and conquests on the foam
Scarce recompense for rude impatience in the home.
The leader for his firmness now is deemed untrue,
Must see vindictive foes such of his friends pursue
As Anaxagoras, scorned for his thought o'erbold,
And Pheidias falsely charged with theft of statues' gold;
E'en the beloved Aspasia harried, as if vile,
Impious to the gods and full of earthly guile!
So zealous Pericles forthwith for her appears,
And, face to face with jurors, rescues through his tears.

Still shrinketh not this statesman, stayeth resolute
Though ghastly pestilence awhile can make him mute,
Takes a dear son away and so his spirit daunts
That ever was unmoved by foolish cravens' taunts.
Yet spake he soon this wondrous noble eulogy
On all the dead had fallen Athens to set free:
"Laud and consider them e'er by their deeds enshrined
As unsurpassable, eternally entwined
With every form of good! For Athens breeds a folk
Given of their own will the virtues to invoke;
A people blest with power to ponder and then act;
Covetous to believe that none has justice lacked;
Scorning not poverty, rather, contemning such
As weak and ostentatious vaunt that they have much;
Athenians own a city open to the world,
Nor can it possibly from grandeur vanish hurled!"
Distressed by constant ills, beleaguerment, foul plague,
At last sank Pericles, o'ercome by sickness vague;
Consoled him with the thought, in struggles scarcely few,
Whate'er was done, he ne'er a man of Athens slew;
Unsullied by aught base, passed calmly to that end
Which high philosophies endeavour oft to mend.

XI

Well seemed it, then, all forms of good to emulate,
Whence rivalry uprose in cities separate;
And e'en to-day is felt the splendour of that hour
When literature and arts attained exceeding power,
As witness sculpture, sudden bursting trammels crude,
Turning to beauty's worship with rare force imbued.

In mighty theatres to breeze and sunshine free,
Listened vast throngs to strains of lofty poetry,
Enjoyed the keenest wit, or tragic notes so deep,
It were impossible their merit to o'erleap.
Swiftly the early praise of Bacchus' excellence
Into a play advanced dramatic and intense:
So must worn human themes fresh sate the thirsting soul,
Or destiny's events interpreted unroll
Strange meanings, Heaven's will!
Unto what height could reach
One skilled Prometheus' lesson in its strength to teach;
That daring rebel who a jealous god defied,
Yet won huge benefits by means of valiant pride;
Much as if any, yet, things new would recommend,
And learns, alas! ere long, to suffering he will bend;
Thus Æschylus sublime, awed by the power of fate,
Deals with sad ills foredoomed that humankind await.
Ever the poets cast abroad a wider glance,
Striving for truth of thought, dared steadily advance;
Thus Sophocles would first of serious fault accuse,
Then, with a skill abounding, retribution use;
Whose genius must pourtray a noble king struck down,
Adjudged by destiny to lose his wife and crown,
E'en parricide become; then eyeless, seeing not,
Kiss children well beloved, and wander far, forgot,
Who had presumed to ask what evil he had done,
Struggled within the network by a harsh fate spun!
Although sinned Œdipus, in human virtues strong,
Deserved he such a mass of densely serried wrong?
Next soars Euripides, even suspects a god!
So feels the weight of Aristophanes' sharp rod;

And leniently can view some fall 'fore fate's assaults
Because their merits are less puissant than their faults.
And he obeisance doth to the eternal might
Of fixed enthralling love, dwelleth on such delight;—
Lo, chained Andromeda, by a fond lover freed,
Would stay a wife or slave, even as he decreed!
At her own fearful cost, avenging cruel woes
Medea, sorely wronged, inflicted bloody throes!
How nobly chose the maid at Aulis sacrificed
Who, for her harassed country, rescue thus enticed!
Nor must she one imperil that her life would save,
Iphigeneia therefore steadfast died and brave;
And thus the playwright's efforts in new fields advance
And folk of Hellas learn the glory of romance!
Which valiant thoughtful poet, ancient humanist,
Little revered Olympus, for he better wist
Than an adulterer could worthily there reign:
Euripides a god more faultless would obtain,
So he exalts the virtues, Heaven's wrath makes clear
'Gainst any that with laws the highest interfere;
For poets should direct the common people's gaze
To steadfast Cosmic truths, warn and perchance amaze.

XII

Slowly religion passed from cult of stones and trees
E'en to a mystic bond with one could ire appease!
First sires must worshipped live, then heroes play such part
Before the mightier gods can into being start!
And Greeks, of subtle mind, to deities soon hied
Wherein they found poor mortals' needs personified,

And so from hunting's goddess prized by maidens chaste,
To Venus, patron sweet of such as love would taste;
From healer Æsculapius to great war-chief Mars,
True causes helped religion beneath Hellas' stars.
E'en yet, to many men, divinities appeal,
Linger in fancy, though they seem no more ideal.
Despite our better gods, would any strive, permit
That Zeus no more enthroned should on Olympus sit?
Father and king of gods and men! Once prone to love
Fair women upon Earth and goddesses above!
Grows surely loved a god that, of a virgin born,
Dies but to view again the beauties of the morn;
E'en henceforth exercise, at solemn secret hours,
O'er gravest devotees, communion's certain powers.
For, from Thrace mountainous unto the sunnier south,
The story of a god has passed from mouth to mouth,
That, yielding raptures vast, bestows eternal life!
But long within the land already has been rife
A worship of the trees and harvest, luscious fruit,
So 'tis as god of wine that Bacchus gains repute;
Whose fame shines forth increased because an Orphic cult,
Of nature wonderful, assisteth to exult.
First roved fierce Bacchanals, strange Mænads, horde by horde,
Tearing some wretched beast till crimson torrents poured;
Thus, god-inspired disciples, tasted Bacchus' blood,
And death o'ercame beneath the strangest fountain's flood.
Then, in an epoch new, men prized a grape-born stream,
Must drink of that could humblest penitents redeem;

As mystics hoped soon joys heavenly to begin,
And, as ascetics, felt they should be freed from sin.
They held that Dionysus, entering in the soul,
Conferred re-birth, so made it even God and whole!
And while wine's deity was honoured in the cup,
Lived that of corn in bread, off which must duly sup,
At holy Mysteries, the worshipper devout,
Who cleansed with water, heard, as he was passing out,
The lord be with you all! For in such classic time,
Men felt an impulse toward transcendency sublime!
Much truly, Athens loved to hear of Pentheus, king,
That dared a son of God into a prison fling.
How gloat the citizens to see the monarch slain
When godlike Bacchus would his royal foe restrain,
And, bursting soon the bonds have vainly held him fast,
On his vile captor lights, can a strange influence cast
Whereby the sovereign e'en is forced to join the throng
Of Mænad revellers singing their frenzied song!
These grow forthwith confused and of defective sight;
For Bacchus plans revenge on one a god could slight;
And thus they deem the stranger is a lion fierce,
Shout and surveying wildly, nigh the welkin pierce;
Espying in a pine-tree, hurl him to the earth,
And tear him limb from limb, while she that gave him birth
Excels in violence, last finds the severed head
Which long was dear to her! Thus must respect be bred:
And he die tortured that has dared to spurn a prince
Who comes divinest love toward mortals to evince!

XIII

As homage of mankind to gods was ever owed;
Nor Zeus nor Pallas favours readily bestowed,
So round a central hall steadily pillars grew,
Till majesty supreme of temples rose to view,
And fanes surpassingly throughout the land being set,
In sites oft glorious the ancient needs were met.
'Midst massive columns tall, with no uncertain sound
The priests performed the rites, could oracles propound;
Allowed they (seeking not such power as Egypt gave),
Poets, philosophers to deal with ethics grave;
Mere aimed 'twixt angry gods and men to intervene,
By portent, dream and sign, would Heaven's purpose glean;
Yet cautioned and reproved did any gross offend,
Permitted not that man from proper paths should bend.

XIV

Anxious were folk of Greece to help the growth of soul,
O'er progress of the mind would gain complete control;
Let not ideas of worth wither, neglected die,
Asked questions oft and spake with courage, subtlety.
Sprang first through gods the Cosmos into being brought?
How came things known to us by touch or sight or thought?
Could number be the essence of things great and small?
Or water, air or fire the primal base of all?
Long pondering, men seemed intent to find a cause,
As, had Intelligence reared universal laws?

Democritus perceived nor chance nor shrewd design,
Only majestic laws directing atoms fine;
And there are particles (as he with prescience guessed)
Of number infinite, by motion's rage oppressed,
Which, almost beyond notion, subtle and minute,
Can consciousness and life and senses constitute.
Ever from neighbouring objects there come delicate
Imaged phenomena ourselves to penetrate!

Matter has always been, for who could well conceive
In time a sudden lapse? its morn or noon or eve?
So dared, in early days, the sage Democritus
Dispute creation's vogue, 'mongst e'en the credulous!

Coming from far Abdéra, rich in meadowland,
Resolved, unlike the throng, to search and understand,
He travelled much, renewed oft eagerness to learn,
Must valiant meditate, for man's well-being yearn;
E'en laughter preach as cure for disappointment's ill,
Would everywhere the cult of gaiety instil;
Simple and generous, assisting morals pure,
Cried that a heart at peace is good of all most sure!

Scarce yet, with toilsome step, experiment had proved,
By fixed eternal laws the Universe is moved;
But Thales could foretell eclipses of the Sun,
And Aristarchus claimed, Earth round that orb doth run;
Nay, ruled Pythagoras, the Sun a centre stands
For all his planets' motions, strictly such commands!

'Twas he that hazarded, Earth's elements depend
On special numbers giving each a different trend;
Who lived possessed of lore which, founded in the East,
Vast in Crotona grew, where when his fame increased,

He formed a brotherhood, since souls, he often dreamed,
Through a slow discipline, may surely grow redeemed :
And just as certainly spirits of mortals, here
Have roamed before, and even yet will reappear.

XV

Shone brightly soon as stars, supreme, pre-eminent,
Sages a quenchless splendour to their era lent ;
For rose a trinity of blest undying fame,
Musers with power a glorious message to proclaim.
Arrived first Socrates, whom Plato followed fast,
While Aristotle next, in learning, both surpassed.
Who more than Socrates, the lucid, has defined
A way to strengthen and improve the human mind ;
Evinced a character original and rare,
For good, been willing traits the sturdiest to declare ?
Than Socrates the bold to judgment falsely brought
Has oft a spectacle more sad been viewed or thought ?
E'en though persistently he pleasant dreams disturbed,
Extravagant ideas of those around him curbed !
A sculptor in his youth, and then a senator,
He rescued life as an intrepid warrior,
And ever bore all ills with tireless fortitude,
As his mate's virulence, a scolding vixen rude.
Deemed he that everyone should search the inner man,
Survey the path of duty and convictions scan.
When sceptic sophists sneered that reason ne'er can reach
The truth through conscious thought, he dared their views impeach ;

Disliking all the ways of metaphysics blind,
Cried that each term and aim should clearly be defined.
He liked, as though it told above his daily bread,
A disputation sharp, and then (if aught were said
With groundwork insecure) would show where truth was not,
Never to censure fools or dogmatists forgot.
Assured that knowledge just, betterment and advance
Come but if folk will seek to minimise the chance
Of error and mistake, valiantly Socrates
Would ask or blunt deny, with a strange deftness seize
Occasion as it fell, to disconcert o'ersure
Babbling philosophers, high, low or rich or poor.
As for thyself, said he, aim at intelligence,
Then mayest thou approach or move toward excellence;
Yet, 'scaped he not a fault, dwelt upon knowledge long,
Concerning human passions, limited his song!
Last, sought out for suppression by determined foes
Who secretly desired men's liberties to close;
Contemptuously he gazed, with scorn his judges eyed,
Freely aroused their ire and enemies defied,
For he was hurt that deemed he merited reward,
And now stood charged, proclaimed an impious and abhorred
Corrupter of the young! Purchasing not release,
Cheerfully for a month he let not discourse cease,
So helped his followers, evinced no dread of death,
But uttered kindly words, as noble Plato saith.
Grasping the hemlock calmly, Socrates the frank
Consummate disputant, then slowly, fearless drank,

Gaining a name renowned 'mongst all disposed to plead
Knowledge shall have full scope man's destinies to lead.

XVI

Truth's martyr bold! Whose questions fierce and skill profound
Brought to thee cruelty but men a method sound!
Forerunner of the creed wert'st of serenity,
That has supported oft, will help men yet to be;
E'en of a stoic faith whose wisdom few can doubt,
Each in his heart respects and all are poor without;—
Virtue is good surpassing, vice the only ill;
Should come, if duty call, subservience of the will;
Lo, man, thou art of God, a generous part then play;
Ponder o'er that is good, from wrong swift turn away;
Seek the attainable, search for what sense requires,
Be master of thyself, and limit thy desires!
'Twas Zeno gave such rules, lacking the force to drive
Perchance the multitude whose wish is faint to strive,
Flaunting no horrid hell wherewith toward right to whip,
Nor sprinkling Heaven's nectar on the parched lip,
Atoning through nor grace, nor sacrifice, for wrongs,
Scarcely, with magic, gaining wonder-loving throngs,
Yet offering for ever treasuries of good,
Wherewith to soothe their lot the wise have understood.

XVII

Next one that, with disciples sauntering through a grove,
Or, on a couch reclining, philosophic strove,

Discussed the principles of an ideal State,
Did his thoughts loftily in dialogue relate.
While mystics of that age adored an Essence vast,
And hours with a great Being in sweet communion passed;
To Plato man appeared a part of the divine,
Slave of a special purpose, choice and pure design,
A tiny fragment of transcendent Universe
Whose wide existent soul doth many souls disperse.
He nurtured oft, such moods as reverence command
For finest views of God and every virtue grand;
Would lift traits, character, the mind direct and mould;
Desiring all men to nobility should hold!
Man's soul was never smirched by such a slight as death!
E'er feels the hindrance of dependence upon breath!
Has reminiscences to everyone appear
Making world-changes seem less visionary, more clear.
The senses breed in man ideas general,
As swiftness, length or height, that timely, one and all,
Lend aid whereby mere vague phenomena become
Real and alive, nor stay of impotence the sum.
Two parts compose the Universe;—ideas high,
And low appearances material, which die;
'Twixt them a fusion springs; how, Plato doth not tell,
Save in a way that fails insistent doubts to quell.

XVIII

Devolved ambitious thought, and to another passed
Almost as if a spell upon his mind were cast,
Causing it so to look in wisdom's shining face
That among sages old none gained such glorious place

As Aristotle, e'er illustrious Plato's friend,
A worshipper who sought his master's work to mend
And hoped by plans exhaustive, luminous, exact,
Truth's startling mysteries, laborious to extract!
Awhile the tutor of such valiant king renowned
As paths from Macedon to distant India found,
He by his patron's help, came Athens' charms to know,
Would see a cult of Nature prosper there and grow;
Himself must penetrate the secret realms of life,
Indulge in strange researches with vast interest rife.
Observed he animals as well as man and things,
Zealously read the stories Earth for ever sings;
Showed qualities, apparent in but men a few,
Then oft enabling them to cleave out ways anew.
Soared he unlike his master, simpler methods taught,
Assured that scrutiny with potency is fraught.
While lofty Plato thinks ideas are the chief cause
Of objects sensible; his pupil looks for laws,
Respect for matter shows, says evidence collect,
Deduce and prove, progressing, win results correct!
Choosing sagaciously to separate each theme,
E'er Aristotle aids and wieldy makes in scheme,
Many things ponders on, next will conclusions tell,
Letting mankind discover he can awe compel.
Lo, when fluidity was vaguely held the sun
And essence of things all, how seemed advances won
When the Stageirite spake! Four elements he saw:
Heat, dryness, moisture, cold, that various joined by law,
Breed air, earth, water, fire. Showing a force though crude
Of analytic skill, he watched in manner shrewd

The birth of ice, steam, snow, and well remarked how
flame
Minishes what it feeds on, or makes large the same.
His mind life's essence, that of generation caught,
A progress oft supreme in vital subjects brought.
Aiming at conquests certain, triumphs numerous,
All others he surpassed with footsteps glorious;
Now marking well each phase of logic's method
sound,
Now dealing with the sophists that unfair confound,
And baring stratagems; or turning to the art
Of purer rhetoric, treated the honest part
Of moulding hopes and views.
He must in ethics work,
Calmly observe that passions seething inly lurk,
In secret agitate, oppress and sway the mind,
Oft perturbations cause until moods freely find
Outlet, acknowledgment. With morals as his task,
He long deliberates, this question likes to ask:—
What is the good in chief? and ever clear replies,
In fostering reason's growth consummate wisdom
lies!
Appraising high the different virtues, he would yet
On search for knowledge e'er the highest value set;
Take note, said he, suggest, experiment, compare;
Of intuition's vain imaginings beware!
Exists a choice of paths? then choose the happy mean
And safe pursue the way which lies extremes between!
So spoke this famous sage of feeble frame and voice,
Summoned the cramped of thought in freedom to
rejoice;
Tilted at dread of science, Nature new defined,
And fortified, refashioned energies of mind.

Lighting a darkness wide; still brilliant though
remote,
Nor dimmed by later masters in our vision float,
Shines this protagonist who gave his utmost soul
To purposes of truth, and reason brave, heart-whole
Could truly consecrate; loved observation keen
Not merely of mankind, had Nature scanned and
seen!

XIX

Now since advance is linked with epoch, place and
clime,
E'en a poetic age of wisdom nigh sublime
A blemish shall betray. So Plato planned a State
Where thralls should do the will and pleasure of the
great;
Discerned not, at the feasts of Dionysus, wrong
If some should with the wine-cup brimming dally long,
As at symposial hours, when Athens' chosen knew
With dance and melody the sensuous to woo.
Lo, scarce had wedded woman honour yet attained
Fullest and loftiest, e'en if at home she reigned;
Being held in proper awe, had maids to spin and weave,
Might slave-attended walk abroad, calm joys achieve;
If mother, saw much effort lavished on her boy
While every daughter stayed neglect, a gentle toy;
Though Phryne and Neæra, Lais charms displayed
By polished intellect and wit seductive made.
Surely a mighty race, from when in memory
rung
The numbers passionate by gifted Sappho sung,
Greeks faltering not before astonished Cosmos' gaze,
Produced a galaxy rich till the later days!

An Epicurus, prizing all could summon ease
Unto a soul perturbed, its need of calm appease,
Forgot nor morals nor the thought magnificent
Which lofty dignity to human life has lent!
So where Herodotus minds with bright visions filled
And shone Thucydides, strife's annalist most skilled,
In time the travelled Plutarch e'en in Hellas strives,
Surveys antiquity and dealing with great lives,
Seizes a graphic saying, incident or jest,
And shows how character is thus depicted best;
Unconsciously reveals his pagan virtues sound,
Displays a gentle spirit, even love profound.

XX

Fresh riches to procure and restlessness appease
Oft Greeks ambitiously snatched lands in distant seas;
And so the Macedonian conquered half the world,
Resistless force against the shores of Egypt hurled,
Where, as magnificence in Alexandria rose,
Science and literature new virtues could disclose;
While throve academies and arts unnumbered reigned,
And a great home for books a vast renown obtained.
A poet pastoral, Theocritus here dwelt,
Telling the Cyclops' love for Galatea, could melt;
Or of a fisher's dream whose net reveals a prize
Of finest gold that yet can cheat sad hungry eyes.
Oft must the singer turn to shepherd's simple thought
Of rivals, or the lambkins in disaster caught;
Here well describe the sights and scents of orchards gay,
There unto features pass which decadence betray;
Hasten to adulate with pæan, fulsome smile,
A Ptolemy intent upon a union vile;

Limn fashionable ladies, at Adonis' feast,
That from a chatter vapid, frivolous ne'er ceased.
Here rigid Euclid, ay, bold Archimedes strove,
Geometry, mechanics into systems wove;
So men of Hellas could the mind's delight renew;
But proudest rulers would a sumptuous course pursue
Till destiny, as if dissatisfied, at length,
Preferred to feebleness the vogue of foreign strength.

XXI

Fearfully woes afflict the bosom passing fair
Of Egypt's youthful queen, as in a languorous air
She strives to win her throne! But one her foes
o'ercame!
And she more lovely far and in her heart aflame
Than beauties he e'er knew, sinks in his warlike arms,
By zealous gratitude without cessation charms,
Nay, when his star is bright, even across the foam,
Must she great Cæsar follow to Imperial Rome.
He falls, so Cleopatra eastward makes her way,
Views her neglected kingdom but a night and day;
Suspect of valiant Antony, forthwith would please,
Steering Cilicia-wards, swift ploughs the Cyprian seas;
Up the clear Cydnus in a gorgeous galley sails,
E'en clad as Venus, sees her Mars, nor dallying fails
By words of witching force his ready soul to reach
And with a potent spell the deepest heart-pangs teach.
Sworn friends to revelry and foes of foolish care,
Toward Alexandria the joyous twain repair;
Reck not of Nemesis until Octavius skilled
On sea strikes hard at Antony, that hapless filled
With thought despondent 'scapes, after his consort dear
And her Egyptian craft have fled in panic fear.

The victor wrathful follows such as hope being past,
Choose, desperately moved, a mausoleum vast
Wherein to die. Ne'er so divine she seemed before
Nor he at any time more worthy to adore,
Yet, with a rapt embrace as lingering as they dared,
Sighs heaviest and words by agony impaired,
At last they separate.
Swift on his blade he falls;
While she her duty to her children dear recalls;
Then crafty summons fruit, wherein an asp is hid,
And having grief o'er keen among her maids forbid,
Writing conveys a wish by Antony to lie
In splendid robes arrayed and jewels suitably;
Last leans and bares her breast, and places on it calm
An instrument of tragic universal balm.
So makes she nothing of the glory that has been,
Naught of the beauty, mind, graciousness of a queen
Joined through a custom strange to one of little worth,
By force of passion to those highest upon Earth!

XXII

Oft Hellas feared a rival, the far sea-lapt Tyre,
Whose mariners and merchants with a keen desire
For barter bringing wealth, valiantly looked for gain
In Persia, Babylon, Egypt, e'en Britain, Spain;
Now westward sailed for tin with precious cargoes full,
Now eastward bore by land their dyed and woven wool.
Lo, Tyrian settlements soon colonies became,
More, early Carthage won a long-enduring fame;
Maintained a force of ships that many a year was used
Against Sicilian Greeks who oft to yield refused,
Even invoked the aid of a new puissance, Rome,
Of famous might before she grew an Empire's home.

AN EMPIRE OF THE WEST

CONTEST

Who, on the valiant would his will impose,
Crafty himself awhile perchance shall bear,
Resolving next all kindness to forswear,
High sets the worth, as argument, of blows.
Ruth to eschew in vanquishment of foes,
With smallest scruple busily ensnare,
Has seemed the rule of such as well prepare
A speedy end to harsh contention's woes.
In friendly struggles, who with footstep swift
First reached the goal, has scarcely rested, smiled!
Who tamed the fierce or won a prize, a gift;
Conquered in battle or but conflict mild,
Has heard unmoved of others cast adrift
Nigh failure's rocky shore, 'midst waters wild.

AN EMPIRE OF THE WEST

If any, choosing paths of never annalled man,
In old Etruria roam, the centuries would span,
To him the deeply carved sarcophagus recalls,
A gloomy folk constrained to raise huge city walls,
Adorn their sepulchres with graphic forms of art,
Until in battle forced from liberty to part,
Then surely merge among the resolute and strong
Craving to daunt the world with sword and spear and thong.

I

Benignly seven hills saw rise an ancient town
Where tawny Tiber's shores rang with a folk's renown
Whose little ones were taught, for future benefit,
Stories of shining deeds and courage infinite;
Being roused in after years resentful wrath to share,
As by the woes that whelmed Virginia chaste and fair:
To undermine the soul or virtue's force disguise,
Crime's condonation never ventured 'fore their eyes!
Save with the sire's consent, no child had liberty,
Nay, erring sons might find for life availed no plea;
Too, high revered she lived that had the offspring borne,
E'er was the first to hold dishonour up to scorn.
The fathers chose the king, till kingship passed away,
Then consuls twain, elect, in peace and war held sway;

Ah, rigour ruled Rome's heart, as consul Manlius
proved
Who stern condemned his son, nor by his death was
moved.

II

Strife seemed this people's trade and cowards there
were few,
How to divide his foes the crafty Roman knew :
'Gainst neighbouring cities, foreign shores and far-off
lands
His conquering genius drave, issuing dire commands.
While Carthaginians lax on mercenaries leant,
Rome's zealous hardier race energies better spent,
Scarce from sagacity to folly were enticed,
Never to fiendish gods like Moloch sacrificed,
Long steadfastly against their adversaries warred,
With bravery resistless and e'en guile abhorred
O'ercame a fearful foe in a last hideous siege,
Then could survey the world their gorgeous humble
liege!
But martial triumphs soon awake to simple song
A shrewd and sturdy mind. To Ennius ever throng
Gratefully memories of those upbuilt the State,
And he decides their acts with care to celebrate ;
Even discourse on myths dear to the patriot's soul,
Next chant the wondrous march of Romans to their
goal.
A valiant thoughtful bard! disposed at times to
doubt
The puissance of the gods, because the just devout
Suffer mischances sore ; while such as can do ill
Seem oft to prosper and pursue their utmost will.

Yet Ennius also joyed to show his faith complete
In lofty destiny; must of the greatest treat,
Tirelessly seek the glory of his land to trace,
Worth in its annals and all mighty deeds embrace.
Ah, struggles sad and bitter feud of high and low,
Patricians and the mass, 'twas fated Rome should know;
Albeit, despite the strife, surely the folk advanced,
The people's power prevailed, law's might became enhanced;
Rudest reformer Cato scarce could be forgot,
Nor Gracchi championing men's hard and landless lot.

III

Oft was sought higher help, ever in case of need
Unto mysterious powers devoted subtle heed!
Treasured the family a cup for sacrifice,
Mediatory incense burnt, so favours would entice.
To gods of field and forest e'en these Romans bowed,
On Faunus, Saturn, Ops and Ceres cried aloud:
Too, lares and penates played their homely part
While Mars, Quirinus, Vesta deeply touched the heart,
And Juno, Jupiter could with Minerva form
A trinity to shield the town from every storm.
Later came deities of many a varying kind,
Though from afar, a home magnificent must find;
As great Apollo hither borne across the wave,
A Sun-god capable from mischiefs vast to save,
And Persian Mithras, noted for his crimson stream,
And Isis, Egypt's goddess that would all redeem:
Many divinities high realms could animate,
Lacked never priests the rites in fanes to celebrate.
Yet, pestilence and famine being from Heaven hurled,
While superstitious fears pervaded wide the world;

One with a doubt of gods soared to an utterance loud,
Braved the censorious tongues of those together crowd
And novel thought dislike, always the old prefer,
What is traditional to be the best aver.

IV

Was it to prove how bright may shine the poet's gift,
Clearness from darkness' maze to separate and lift,
Lucretius early sang? Whose declaration wise,
As to first origins, e'er causes our surprise.
For he the thoughtful nature can with reverence fill,
Who deemed, in number infinite and never still,
Atoms detached in space, once on a time were stirred
By influence unknown, together first concurred;
Though when, is past man's ken, who must at best divine
E'er Universe has been, was made not of design.
Atoms their qualities revealed to man long since;
And such endowments as they favourably evince
He should employ for good. Senses alone can guide
Him that for truth would search; for how could aught provide
More light than these afford? Had gods created all,
Fewer were horrid woes and evils which appal!
How many flaws affect the finest things of Earth!
Even of suffering various there is little dearth
Among poor animals. And thus the poet moved
Ere universal Law by science had been proved!
Wherefore must such a soul, zealous and crystal-clear,
Decorous and humane, require of men to hear

His words unwelcome? Fear of gods, in truth, he held,
And dread of death produce each ill has ever swelled
The burdens of mankind. Behold, ambition, greed
Scarce would take root if death foul terror did not breed;
The want supreme is tranquil purity of heart,
Richest is he that acts a plain contented part:
Dignity to arrive at each should firm reject
The inexact and vain, never the truth neglect.
Avoiding credulous and superstitious thought,
Man will reach liberty and be to blessings brought!
Lucretius aimed at fresh securer human peace,
Would show the Universe is raised above caprice;
Demonstrate with the body perishes the soul,
Condemn the notions cherished of a further goal
As dreams fantastical. Told he how sun and sky,
The land and sea were formed, poor savages rose high
To civilised estate. He would the timid soothe,
Their troubled path through storms and hideous earthquake smooth.
Fail not sonorously his verses to disclose
A zealous and sweet spirit, proud in its repose,
Full freighted with a wish to soften and allay
The chiefest ills pursuing man upon his way:
Earnestly would provide a philosophic feast
For those will list to one that chaunts as Nature's priest.

V

While subtle folk of Hellas, spiritual, refined,
Advancement of the frame and intellect enshrined,
Romans for order famous, eager to live free,
In plan and action, law, to greatness found the key.

Oft to the circus, yet, thronged citizens for sport,
Must ever to the baths luxurious resort;
So, a bold soldiery's uncurbed excessive power,
Furthered intestine strife through many a wretched hour;
Until, as hope arose of stronger government,
There came a demigod by gracious heaven sent
Who in the roll of men will bear a deathless name,
Move never possibly from universal fame.
By moral lapse, strange weaknesses or vices hard,
Talents pre-eminent, alas! are sometimes marred;
Nor Cæsar all escaped, whose blood in youth ne'er paused,
Swift dancing in his veins, tumultuous passions caused.
Burst he maturely forth, a sun of brilliance clear,
E'er disinclined to harass, show him o'er severe,
Yet he could strike with force, as Rhodes' sea-robbers found
When who was captured once, ran them at last to ground;
As, too, learnt Gallic tribes vanquished by Roman arms,
Since Cæsar saved the State from frequent wild alarms
By sternness politic. Calm, when his victories palled
On a proud Senate's taste; Julius the home-recalled,
Traversing Rubicon, aside decisive swept
Soon his antagonists. Failure in turn accept
Hispania and Massilia; c'en Pharsalia's plain
Since there a rival chieftain legions led in vain.
First of a line of Cæsars, then the victor ruled
A fickle Latin world whose yearning slowly cooled
For one had broke its will. Lo! tribune named for life,
Dictator, emperor then, to treachery's sharp knife

And jealousy's, he fell, when likelihood appeared
A single prince would show nigh every trait endeared
Through worthy governance. Where others groped and sought,
With understanding swift he pierced a hidden thought;
As author-strategist, astounding other men,
Could lightly win campaigns, prove magic in his pen;
As statesman, orator, framer of worthy laws,
Seldom has failed to gather generous applause!
While weakly souls in time from hard-earned rank decline,
Cæsar the higher rose, all others could outshine!

VI

Now falls imperial might upon a cherished young,
Sagacious prince and shrewd, whose praises far are sung;
Gracious Augustus governs and reports resound
That verily a god has honoured mortal ground!
Amidst Magnificence, gain orators just fame,
Poets, historians and satirists a name.
Men learn from Cicero, can aptest Horace quote,
Are thrilled by Livy's pictures, Virgil's lofty note;
First from the waxen tablet, then papyrus page,
Fly to an avid world thoughts in this golden age;
The while, as sculptures tell and other forms of art,
A culture manifold has in man's scheme a part.
Citizens to the forum eager force their way,
Return their friends' salute, exchange the hour of day,

Touch on affairs or politics; 'mid bustle, noise,
Make for a spectacle, at thermæ summon joys;
So matrons, missing not their due of pleasure soft,
Are wonted forth to go, attired by slave girls oft
Unhappy in their lives. But a disastrous fall
And decadence surprising doth the world appal,
For potentates, abusing customs of the time,
From righteous conduct lapse to tyranny and crime;
Contemning liberty, can justice lightly waive,
Nor always efforts make their dignity to save.
Afar, pro-consuls rule majestic foreign lands,
Wield the advantages which discipline commands,
View victories rewarding valour and vast skill,
Both talent to achieve and constant force of will.
But near, in splendid Rome, themselves must oft reveal
Licence and ways corrupt, impairment of ideal;
Truly a canker mines the glory of the State,
Displays and sensuous shows sustain the small and great,
Trident and net meet sword, ferocious beasts face men,
Such is the lust for blood, woe to the vanquished when
The thumb is adverse turned! Too, despots scent a way
To glut their ire anew, whence shake men in dismay
Dreading informers vile. Lo, highest arrogance
Disposed to pageantry and the defiant glance
Of doomed barbarians, would please the gaping crowd,
Orders a vainest, gorgeous, unearned triumph proud!
Yet in an atmosphere of terror, murder, vice,
When emperors to suspicion friends can sacrifice,

Some in the fields of wisdom solace aim to find,
Ay, a philosopher sways strangest Nero's mind.

VII

Austere of thought in youth, toward rhetoric impelled
By tastes his own and hopes a Spanish sire has held;
Annæus Seneca, a pleader eloquent
From his loved Rome to rugged Corsica being sent
A seeming undeserved, drear exile to endure,
To his fond mother Helvia oft epistles pure
Indites with tenderness, since he has wish and time
To cultivate his soul, and think of things sublime.
Much he desires again to mingle with the world
And pants to cure its ills, though downward he be hurled
By the o'erwhelming storm of tyranny and fear
Wrecking the capital; last, is o'erjoyed to hear
The Empress seems resolved to win a lofty stake,
Can his recall ensure, that he may undertake
Nero's enlightenment, who, mounting a proud throne,
Betrays by fearful deeds, he means to stand alone.
And well wise Seneca the barque of State directs
Till his lord absolute a danger clear detects;
Has in his mother, vilest Agrippina, found
One who can sharp oppose, and firm maintain her ground;
Whence the son took her life and licence free acquired,
While prudent Seneca from public cares retired.
Whose wealth and high repute aroused the Cæsar's rage,
So that the edict reached one that upon a stage
Unsteady, perilous, had oft himself prepared
To suffer every ill, and now in calmness shared

The glory of the great courageous unto death;
Dignified, in his torture, drew a final breath!
Scarce a philosopher or moralist before
Had dared declaim against the wickedness of war;
Reasoned that men are brothers, rights deserve though slaves,
Since, for life's sanctities, the higher nature craves.
This gentle stoic who, persistently humane,
Knew mercy's worth and love and calmness under pain;
Shines forth a teacher prone friends' follies to correct,
Would stir the inmost heart rather than intellect.
He grievous anguish felt for suffering mankind,
Submitted yet to live with Cæsar close entwined;
Whence hostile critics shafts have launched against his name,
As that he wealth amassed or Nero saved from blame,
Agreed to measures stern. Who gives a prince support,
Is danger forced to meet other than he doth court!
And hours with Seneca, despite each seeming fault,
The conscience stimulate and inner being exalt;
When vice its barb wide planted, cruelty its sting,
He could uphold the virtues, sympathy forth bring!

VIII

So then this lofty sage instilling fortitude,
Zealous to comfort those whom misery pursued,
Himself arrives at woes! has helped the influence
Of such as pure desires and an enlightened sense
Join with outspokenness. Behold, though Romans high,
Through a great multitude of slaves can gratify
Many an idle wish, and sapped is ancient force,
Whence often luxury runs an excessive course;

Yet, in an empire huge some noble deeds are done,
O'er far outlying fields betterment is begun:
Imperial genius would have provinces to glow,
Contrives that distant lands prosperity shall know.
Thus Afric solitudes beside an arid shore
Receiving forums, fanes, their dulness late forswore;
Villages Spanish, Gallic, speedy rose to towns
Where poor men sat at feasts and wealthy folk earned crowns
Of honour, gratitude. And, those it sure behove
To help their weaker friends, often with ardour strove,
A patriot's part would play, let caste to good compel;
Whence curials and knights, e'en trader folk as well,
Such as the freedmen that to rank augustal rose
Sought meritoriously traits soundest to disclose!
More, in the frontier cities, legionaries stayed,
There with the native damsels lawful union made,
So that the Roman spirit spread and journeyed far,
Infusing discipline, knew naught success to mar;
From Britain to Bithynia bore the emperor's power,
E'en once, across the Iser, nearly gained the hour!
Rich lands already old, throve civilised anew;
Great baths and aqueducts, roads, bridges sprang to view,
And joyous travellers, by Helicon or Nile,
Lingering pleasantly, could tedious hours beguile.
'Twas a sagacious, valiant, fruitful policy
To 'stablish garrisons, set paths where such should be,
Encourage citizens, though distantly removed,
To harbour tendencies by neighbours rude approved!
But as the Roman folk arose through force of arms,
They were, in truth, inspired by joy in war's alarms;

Wherefore pugnacity developing its bent,
Waxed with the nation's growth, received due nourishment;
And when the mood went far, as oft a passion goes,
'Twas hard to turn aside (though some could so propose
Who clear the peril saw) whence shows unparalleled
Must older ones surpass, all others e'er beheld!
Such years, for criminals blossomed the law's delay,
Agreed they but to strive, in earnest seek to slay;
While a late tragic hour filled relatives with pride
As they recounted how the gladiator died:
Ah, glorious was the end, if while the world admired
And strained their skill to see, contestants brave expired!
For sure it was a boon to scan the art of war
Decked with such circumstance as made all strife adore;
Huge awnings, marble tiers artistically wrought,
And sparkling perfumed founts which pleasant coolness brought;
Near Cæsar, of delights, fierce glittering partake,
Gaze at the beauties who for combatants should quake;
Calmly, 'mid music's strains, sit in a mighty throng,
Moved by ecstatic joys without a thought of wrong!
And glut of pageantry appeased the Romans' eyes
That oft could him regard who might the great chastise;
For standing 'neath a slave-held chaplet, wrought in gold,
He led the nobles, priests and gods and reckless bold

Drivers who in the circus would the concourse thrill,
Longed to o'erthrow their rivals by audacious skill,
Deft guiding chariots far, with swiftness o'er the sand,
Incited foaming steeds the victory to command.
Lo, habits, ways appear, almost as if alive
Men sought, before our gaze, old memories to revive!

IX

How strange to peer within a city of the dead!
Directing eager steps where men were wont to tread
Even in Titus' time; walk in a narrow street
Deep-rutted, heavy-paved, and fancy one should meet
A toga'd Roman ghost; or hear the warning cries
Of litter-bearing slaves who listless throngs surprise;
Or view through iron gratings of a dungeon's wall,
The form and wretched features of an abject thrall!
Pompeii! much is owed thy long survival sure,
Whose glory has attained a full investiture
In every mind disposed to study bygone man,
Or life investigate on Rome's consummate plan!
For when the glowing lava's sudden monstrous stream
Made wretched fugitives exert a force supreme;
Vast overwhelming clouds of huge Vesuvius' dust,
Stifling, impatient, ruthless in their murderous lust,
Preserved for eager eyes in ages later come,
Life's witnesses exact, if in condition dumb.
Here stays a kitchen hearth or iron tripod-stand;
Vessels lie ready there to meet the cook's demand;
Down gaze the household gods still in their little shrine
Beside an altar for libationary wine.

At hand the visitor can gaze on all he would
In villas numerous, close situate as they stood ;
Nor lacks the atrium yet upon the painted wall
A story of the gods around its pillared hall.
Here sat the patron, ne'er from business cares aloof
Beside the limpid water 'neath an open roof ;
And there subservient clients watched his haughty look,
Cringed for their wretched doles and duties undertook,
Unto the law courts followed or the morning call
Or ceremonies ere they reached the dining hall.
Anon the master sleeps, then treads his marble floor,
Reaches the spot for games, and strikes the ball once more ;
But soon enjoys the complex pleasures of the bath,
Deems such to later feasting e'er the proper path ;
Then on a couch reclines surrounded by his friends,
While each to the command how oft to drink attends,
For roses have replaced the dishes on the board
And singers, dancing girls, their stimulus afford.
Dreading no wind capricious, 'neath a cloudless sky,
Good citizens to pleasure could for long apply
In Pompeii their will, or visit temples grand,
Pace colonnades, view statues everywhere at hand.
Or with a purpose keen, they could forth issue, strive ;
As bees from countless cells of a well-ordered hive,
Their skill as merchants of a busy port disclose ;
Recuperate at plays or gladiatorial shows ;
Anxious for public office, seek a neighbour's vote,
In lighter moments Greek or Roman poets quote ;

If humble, upon walls allude to things of heart,
Or with a pungent humour make a rival smart;
Each busy until fate commands him to retire
Along the street of tombs, an object for the pyre,
(Or gain a lesser honour in a lowlier place)
Relinquish membership of an imperious race!

Which folk amongst themselves, adoring Roman soil,
Loved and were indisposed from kindness to recoil;
As cry the monuments, to antiquaries known,
That gentle sentiments express on graven stone,
Where virtuous affection is applauded oft,
The dead request the quick to pass a judgment soft.

So, while a satirist inclined to take things ill,
Liked mildness to o'erlook and bitterness instil;
Even among the class his venom sought to reach,
Lived men and women could a homely goodness teach:
Who doubtless, in their turn, scarce possibly forbore
From giving later peoples many an ancestor
Of dignity inherent and sufficient force;
Aided thereby mankind and evolution's course.

X

Old Tiber's city nurtured sons of glorious name
Who stir imagination, stay secure of fame;
And none had honour more for kindliness of heart
Than Pliny the wide-gifted, graphic to impart
How stern Vesuvius' ire his aged uncle killed,
A naturalist renowned with learning's ardour filled.

As such a nephew calm, has often man achieved
So worthily the steadfast purpose 'twas conceived
Should dominate life's plan? Whose letters show his scorn
Of schemes employed by pleaders that the crowd suborn

To sate their vaulting pride! Inspired by highest traits,
Scourged he informers vile in frequent bold displays.
Soon, nigh the violets and planes of Como's shore
Where he meets fisherfolk, at times pursues the boar;
He dwells in villas choice and entertains his friends,
Or, if a lot is hard, for sufferers finds amends.
Worshipping literature, seeing therein a god;
He, with soul sensitive, along his path must plod
Almost inclined to weep, assuredly can sigh,
As when his slaves seem sad; then must his force apply
To soothe or cure their woes. Oft lavishing bequests
On his small native place, good Pliny never rests
Until he views in part, with permanence endowed
The schools, homes, libraries wherewith he makes men proud.
His pen would trace the gradual progress of his soul
As, with some faults o'ercome, he feels less far from whole;
Lays bare affection's mood tenderest for his wife
And the vast grief of twain who childless passed through life.
Intimate of an emperor specially renowned,
Eastward late Pliny turned, on a high mission bound,
A province governing near the dark Euxine shore,
And must to Trajan writing, his advice implore
Because a curious sect, a people Christian named,
By tacit deprecation cults of Rome defamed.
Thereon the purple's wearer, listening to the plaint,
Soft tolerance enjoined, averse shone to restraint

Of folk thus curious. Used Pliny any force
Of wonted measures harsh, he knew not other course;
Still, learning such strange Christians peacefulness had vowed
And held to morals strict, he readily then bowed
Unto his master's will. Caring for other needs,
In after years he yet busied him with good deeds;
E'er since has famous shone as one of virtue ripe,
A classic figure of a noble Roman type.

XI

Blest was such age which viewed no more distraught mankind
But rulers in succession aiming wounds to bind,
Loving a stoic creed that sound advantage brought,
Led unto contemplation and the loftiest thought.
And legists soon embodied in receptive laws
Ideals humane and just, e'er worthy of applause;
Saw grow less sad the lot of those in servitude
As zealous masters were with freedom's claim imbued.
What other potentates, in splendid might arrayed,
Have oft disclosed the mood by Antonines displayed?
Who headed armies and inspired the law's reforms;
Setting their country first, delivered it from storms;
Spake so that in far-distant empire-realms occurred
Advance and settlement; and near, gave forth the word
Which care for sickness brought, the mind of youth enlarged;
The State with widows' needs and the afflicted charged;
To the deserving granted e'en a timely loan,
Would mitigate the ills of farmers poor, unknown!

XII

Had ne'er Aurelius reigned, a gem of priceless cost
Unto the Roman nation and the world were lost;
For in sore troublous times, sustained he more than well
The Cæsar's arduous part, still could with clearness tell
Of rules and golden thoughts governing, every hour,
His nature intimate; showed how may surely flower
A pagan righteousness; even the high-placed seize
Oft opportunities soul-gentleness to please.
Successor duly named, for virtues all his own,
Whenever need should call another to the throne,
In youth he long received instruction of the best,
E'er found the stoic creed attained the topmost crest
And summit of his wish. Compared with that, he saw
Little in rhetoric or poetry or law
To satisfy the mind. He would as consul spend
His hours of liberty with Hadrian, his friend;
In a famed villa worship beauteous forms of art
Nigh Tivoli's cascades, still pools in Earth's deep heart;
Or, for the sea's relief, bridge intervening leagues,
After a week's dull cares, political intrigues;
But, life throughout, evinced o'ermastering desire
To sacrifice his ease, let never service tire:
And emperor at last, must strive from dawn till night,
The State's finance and laws, morals direct aright.
Was e'er begun a reign more certain to appal
Impressionable minds? The river's ire could fall
On Rome relentlessly; and Parthian foemen wild
Ere long at Syria snatched, and British hosts defiled
A famed integrity; e'en cohorts after war
Imported pestilence beside dread Tiber's shore!

But ever calm, Aurelius falters not nor droops,
Inspirits all, sets forth and valiant leads his troops
Through far hostilities.
And softness he could show,
Being treated traitorously, to kinsmen of a foe;
A seat upon the throne spontaneously gave
To a young aspirant! Truly could any crave
Of his nobility and mild benevolence
And zeal for lofty wisdom, sound intelligence,
Signs surer than the words wherewith he sought to teach:—
The gulf 'twixt good and ill; the certain due of each
Or weak or strong or poor or rich, obscure or proud;
That all need fortitude, since woes all lives enshroud!
Amidst the flowers and fruits, the revels, charms of life,
Ever against excess, should be waged earnest strife!
Mingling among his fellows, let each walk with care,
Contribute benefits in manner free and fair!
Art doer of good deeds? Unknown still onward press!
Art called on to rebuke? consider gentleness!
E'er reason, conscience should, directing heart and hand,
Loom as divinities, obedience brave command.
Death is but natural, though linked with mystery;
'Tis travel to a realm of pre-nativity!
This Cæsar rare, beloved, stoic and early saint
Who governed in a time with ruthlessness acquaint;
Oppressed he Christians by the custom of his age?
Sealed he, in Rome's support, a dire and awful page?
It may be, yet he lives for ever in men's sight
A mighty beacon and distributor of light.

XIII

But often in the cities of that ancient land
Where Pæstum's classic temples still in glory stand,
Afresh arose the signs of man's religious needs
And eagerness to gain forgiveness for misdeeds.
Scarce on penates, lares or the cult of Jove
With all his galaxy, the spiritual longings throve;
Nor by a stoic faith or battling 'gainst the wrong
Were sated common wishes for a moving song.
Tired of wonted gods, men asked a pious creed
Should soothe the inner spirit, strange enchantment breed;
Wherefore to Phrygia's shores or Persia, or the Nile,
Turning some hoped they might despondency beguile.
Thinking of Attys false to Cybele the pure
And his repentance who must passion's loss endure,
Touched were the Romans when, both he and sorrowing priests
Austerest victims, passed to sacrificial feasts;
Won from the Mother great, through agony of soul,
Forgiveness, then could show by symbol man made whole.
Or faith with drama linked could often satisfy,
So, dames of ancient Rome seeing Osiris die,
With Isis wept sad tears. Strange secret! spite his woes,
Wafting a joy supreme, the god from death arose!
And in the solemn rites, woman has honour large,
While white-robed tonsured priests and acolytes discharge

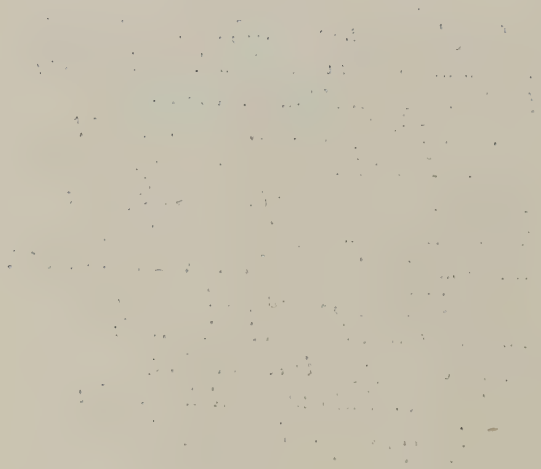
Due parts processional. What ecstasy to feel
At the dread inner shrine, a rapt communion real;
Linger in transport long, dream of a perfect state
Ascetical and calm, ere judgment cometh late;
Renouncing vain delights and wickedness of Earth,
Enter on new existence through a second birth!
And yet in subtle might such goddess is surpassed,
Since mediator Mithras wieldeth a more vast
Transcendent influence; in whom an empire-world
Perceives a spiritual, high moral hope unfurled.
Displaying ne'er a trait like to the Mother's grief,
Yet, with eternal life, brought he how great relief!
For converts to his faith held baptism in strict awe;
In laving, confirmation, viewed a natural law,
Deemed mystic draughts of wine give purity of soul;
While, too, his power of blood into acceptance stole.
Than Cybele more grand, than Isis potent far,
Ruled Mithras with a sway extreme and singular!
Still, would no cult arise, rich, of supremest force,
On miracle rely and have to woes recourse?
Find in an ethic creed a necessary staff;
Offer a cup of love for parched lips to quaff?
Could Rome's stupendous realm for such a sign prepare?
Reveal a prophet who for erring men should care,
Afford transcendent joy, from misery redeem,
A meteor radiantly throughout the darkness gleam?
Sprang vigorous to life upon a distant shore
A faith which, seeming new, an ancient lineage bore;
Since long ere Cæsars thought to mount, then slow decline,
A dazzling sun prepared before the world to shine;

Nay, before bravest Romans laurels round them
wreathed,
A humble Eastern folk into religion breathed
Intensity so great, forthwith arose, at last,
An influence for good greater than any past.

ISRAEL

FAITH

Templed Benares, sacred, hoar and proud
Doth many a woe and whelming grief assuage ;
Tidings of Zion, old and new, presage
Glory and joy upon the true will crowd !
Toward Mecca turn good Moslems and aloud
Call upon Allah, quote the Koran's page ;
The sheen of Rome uplit a gloomy age,
When most believed and none mistrust avowed.
So widely hope, awe's offset confident,
Customs a Word authoritative breeds
And beauty by poetic rapture lent,
Assist the ancient cause of living creeds ;
Ever is born, within the loyal, faith,
Though, nigh, existence vanishes, a wraith !



ISRAEL

Before the desolate a boon and glory clear,
A sun, at last shone forth on a horizon drear;
Ah, never narrative of north or south or west
Like that of Israel old, the soul, and heart impressed,
Where man was oft consumed by ardent high desire
And seemed, as sped the years, endowed with spiritual fire;
Maintained a sure advance, sprang into fame supreme,
Upon a little shore of rock and plain and stream.

I

Of habit migratory and swarthy Arab strain,
Aspired some Syrian clans advantages to gain;
Though worshippers of El, bravely their land forsook,
And Egyptward with herds and flocks themselves betook;
Against the Pharaoh proud rebellion to unfold,
Under a sturdy chief adventurous and bold;
Round whom, like Sargon and Osiris, clings as child
The story of a rescue from dark waters wild.
A fugitive, long past, from Egypt's outraged law,
Moses is Heaven's choice the captives to withdraw
From a compelling grasp, smite with a magic rod
The monarch's soul made hard by Israel's angered God.
Wherefore beside the Nile, folk gruesome trials know
Of boils and hail and locusts, yet despise each blow,

Delay till cruel death upon the first-born falls;
Whereon the captives freed, piercing high watery walls
With countless kith and kin, on further sand and stone
Secure deploy; but murmuring ask for bread, atone
And wandering twoscore years, e'en quails and manna eat;
While to their chief is given the Hebrew God to meet,
Receive the law and die.
Found is a captain new!
Who with the trumpets' blare can Jericho subdue;
Deal pity scantiest to such as dare oppose
His entry to a land where milk with honey flows!
Ever the sacred ark and mystic mercy seat,
The manna, rod and law, in conquest or defeat,
Are proudly borne along. And yet, at times, with glee,
The Sun-god Baal or El doth lure to bend the knee
These men that would his rites and horrid lusts decry,
The human sacrifice denounce as infamy.
Vigilant Jahveh must his folk with rigour school,
Help them with miracles, but jealously e'er rule;
And he, that set a sire as task his son to kill,
Could with the prisoners' wives and babes the shambles fill,
Condoned oft treachery; for harshness toward a slave
Which brought a lingering death, the master sure forgave.
Next chiefs arise as Saul and others mightier still,
Live David, Solomon; nor monarchs fail until
An epoch primal yields. The Hebrews last succumb,
Through dire Assyria's force and Babylon's made dumb.
But Judah, harassed oft by passing armed hosts,
Has sighed for consolation, then, indulged in boasts

She with assured reason strangers could despise,
Her youths, inclined to wed, abroad ne'er turned their eyes;
Her worshippers devout, no graven image saw,
While, above everything, she knew and kept this law:—
Would one entice away those Jahveh's sway had owned,
Deserving pity not, he should forthwith be stoned!
'Twas a fanatic race, that even far dispersed,
Displayed them arrogant, for favours strange athirst;
Harbouring vengeance e'er; by wrongs together held
That oftentime recurring, potent were to weld.

II

Whence in vast Babylon, small Judah's spirit large
Altering not, increased; e'en captives there must charge
Their offspring dutifully gratitude to earn
With pledges they would to Jerusalem return.
Well might the noble psalm and fervid prophecy
Spring from the longings of the fettered to grow free,
Who, having come at last unto their native land,
Could not a wish to utter moving thoughts withstand,
Desired to mould a people, righteousness ensue,
Well Babylonish songs and early legends knew.
O'erstepping ancient ways, men sought a state devout,
Acquired a mystic faith, hope after gloomy doubt;
Thought of a Heavenly Father whom mankind should trust
Since he loves mercy, looms omnipotent and just.
Then all God supplicate and ask he will coerce
Enemies, loud him hail, Lord of the Universe;

In a Messiah cult obtain a boundless joy,
Ay, pray a king will come each foeman to destroy.
Exalted poets soon rapt melodies sweet sing;
And oft impassioned warnings e'en through Israel ring
Of stirring seers and prophets, as one special writ
The true in brave resistance by his words to knit.
Ere long the learned doctors a high ethic caught,
Upheld the golden rule by rabbi Hillel taught;
While Philo, sage renowned, Plato-like, made it known
That only God is good, who by the Word is shown;
A moralist, in truth, joining with Heaven revealed
Greek metaphysic rare from common men concealed.
Him Alexandria incited to distrust
All things upon the mind by aid of senses thrust,
Rather deem faith succeeds when halting reason fails,
Since truth shall thus be reached though widely doubt assails.
Behold the way prepared for one, by race a Jew,
Would show what man owes God, ay and himself, anew!

III

Ne'er men have known a god moving them like to thee,
Lonely and martyred seer and saint of Galilee!
Great teacher, noble friend of such as facile err,
Carpenter's son and Christ, aiming toward love to spur,
That, seeking to save souls, didst lift a lamp divine
Whose glorious beams were brought by saddest woes to shine
Brighter, more piercingly than light e'er shone before;
Vast hosts still worship thee and gratefully adore!

IV

Soon listeners ecstatic greatly wondering heard,
Unto far gentile lands bore the astounding word;
And yet plain fisher-folk's untutored tidings failed
To lift up hearts abroad till strenuous Paul prevailed,
Thinker, enthusiast, disputant full of zeal,
Intrepid missionary determined to reveal
A saviour lord.
And then were passed from mouth to mouth
The Master's sayings, east to west, and north to south,
And treasured well, though seeming not in writing set
Till many a year had passed, while transcripts found as yet
Claim less antiquity. But e'en if, side by side,
Stories of Jesus' life subject for thought provide;
And deeds miraculous are seldom found to bear
The tests applied by such as probe, reflect, compare,
Who say 'twas godly deemed for pious scribes to add
A helping word, at times, to make the Church more glad;
Still, a stupendous tale of love surpassing stands,
Glitters a mighty guerdon, homage wide commands.

V

Ever mankind have sought redemption from their sins!
Egyptians, Hindus, Greeks, after first origins,
Thinking the upward path from a sad brutish state
And old inheritance, showed a deliberate
Offence against the gods, dreamed of assistance pure
Which should immunity from coming wrath procure.
They asked deliverance, through saviours innocent,
From a crime magnified and direful punishment;

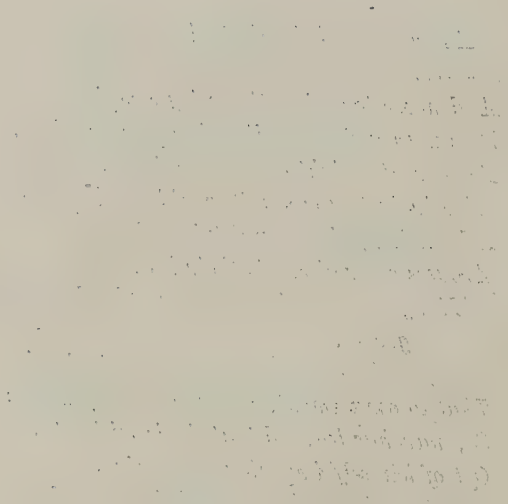
So Persia knew and Greece transcendent mysteries,
Lofty symbolic dramas causing ire to cease
And fraught with influence to comfort and sustain,
Allaying active dread of woeful future pain,
Aiding, whole-making souls of worshippers elect,
That anxious and devout would wickedness reject.
If rose a prophet rare, a saint round whom sublime
Memories softly wound, then might belief in time
Forth bloom, and loyal thousands fall, 'mid tortures keen,
Maintain that Earth had, now, a true redeemer seen ;
While from the valour true of those aflame to preach,
A faith was oft enabled on all sides to reach.
Of such as to a saviour raise approving eyes,
Some seek with all their heart to love and idolise ;
And some, for general good, support what seemed the truth
When, inexperienced, they lived through years of youth
Emotional and sweet, though late they need no aid
Of creeds for yearning and exacting natures made ;
While others, sceptical, trembling for ill repute,
Disclaim the doubt is held a crime to constitute.
Craving a cure for ills, touching on things unseen
As others gone before, the peerless Nazarene
In parable's veiled term of searching argument,
Or mystic questioning, words subtle, eloquent,
Even by sayings hard, to save those round him thought;
Dogmatic creed nor pomp nor splendid ritual taught.

But due observances had long aroused men's love,
Temples and sacrifice were not their life above ;
Wherefore it came about a gem, than all more pure,
Must gain a needed setting, so for use endure.

THE MIGHT OF ROME

PURPOSE

As scarcely eddies that distracted flow,
But serried waves which ever onward beat
And never taste inaction's joy complete,
Does man a firm unflinching purpose show.
As torrents might to many raindrops owe,
Who in just causes well would hindrance meet,
Advancing gain a final triumph sweet,
Arouses comrades, sets their hearts aglow.
'Mongst seas, which once must deeply mountains
groove,
Rose granite domes and vast cathedral spires
That to amazement, awe unchanging move;
So, man has learned that deeds will sate desires,
Oft of himself imperiously requires
Efforts which soul and mightiness shall prove.



THE MIGHT OF ROME

I

As a choice seed increases, into rich soil cast,
The fruit of Israel thrives, attains a glory vast,
Since, in a city great accustomed to dread needs,
For sufferance steadfastly the new religion pleads.
Within drear catacombs, at a dark secret hour,
Slaves tremulous arrive knowing a subtle power,
Are joined perchance by freedmen (told of the new life)
Even a haughty damsel or patrician's wife.
Solemnly such observe the duties of their cult,
Sure reinforced, grow bold and finally exult,
Denounce the emperor as in all things less than God,
Wherefore Rome's potentate rides over them rough shod;
Uses the methods harsh of a determined age,
Inflicts upon them death as in the lions' cage.
Albeit grows the Church in manner magical
Whereas the ancient State would seem inclined to fall;
For in the faith exists a balm may wondrous heal
Wounds e'en of soldiery, and so he comes to feel,
Who would the purple keep, such a mysterious folk
Can prove of worth to him; 'twere well with them to yoke.
Successful in which scheme the murderous Constantine
Encourages the worship, lets it not decline;

A Cæsar who prefers Byzantium as a home,
More pregnant might to bishops leaves thereby in Rome.
Marred is tranquillity forthwith by bitter strife,
For metaphysic struggles 'mongst the Greeks are rife:
The Godhead is triune! says Athanasius grave;
Not so, the Father towers! thus Arius cries, the brave;
And then the fight is waged with fearful violence,
Till Athanasius wins, having Court influence;
And swift are razed the temples, pagan rites subdued,
E'en at death, Constantine is with the faith imbued.

II

Ere long great Julian comes, a ruler of the best,
Statesman and general skilled, philosopher possessed
Of a pure love; disposed to deepest thought serene,
Deeming the One and Good, essence of all has been,
The special substance of a trinity obscure.
Though naught has given us, toward God, a pathway sure,
Yet, in an ecstasy, the soul its cell can leave,
A bond with infinite intelligence close weave
Ere last it is absorbed. Sage Julian fell in war,
Reached by a Persian spear; whereon the Church down-bore
Restraint and obstacles; soon freed from all alarms,
Summoned continuous fresh converts to its arms.

III

Toward truth essential, then, one path appeared alone:—
Such Hebrew book of God as had man's source well shown,

Albeit heresies, at times, were ushered in;
Denied Pelagius bold, death is from Adam's sin;
While, nigh when worship of the Holy Virgin grew
(Whence ancient Isis' home once more a goddess knew)
At Alexandria in knowledge long supreme,
A brave philosopher persistent dared to dream!
Hypatia, lovely maid, for every virtue famed,
And save by jealous foes, honoured, in no way blamed;
Seldom the world has known a lot more sad than thine,
Destined a meteor rare in memory to shine!
Equipt with erudition and a glorious gift,
Through lectures and discourses, feebler folk to lift
Toward interests passionate, as God, the soul, the mind;
Besides philosophy, themes further thou could'st find
To prove thine excellence: geometry, as well
The science of the stars! A bishop's letters tell
Thy nature loftiest that, being over-bold,
Dared'st, through reason's sway with openness to hold
God never trod the Earth. Which seemed an impious creed,
Tallying not with Cyril's, Saint but brief in need
Of friends, fanatical and violent of view,
To make the gentle shrink with horror pierced through.
For, then, the noble maid whose wrongs the world have stirred,
A martyr in the hands of a fierce monkish herd,
Was from her chariot dragged and stripped and churchward borne
By gloating miscreants, heirs to eternal scorn,
That on her visited their wrath infuriate,
Until her soul slow fled from realms of human hate!

Wherefore, through centuries, never a woman dared
Whisper as Theon's daughter loudly had declared.

IV

Well throve intensity during that early hour,
And the enlightened righteous clear must show their power:
To Egypt's deserts bare, at Ephesus condemned,
Was flung Nestorius and heresy so stemmed.
Such said Almighty God in Heaven is and Earth,
To whose eternal form no mother could give birth!
A foe with whom grim Cyril scarce desired peace
Since mysteries are needed, lest the faith shall cease!
Behold an age of thought on God and future life,
Valiant and long debate, arousing bitter strife;
Of countless theologic Councils called to say
How truth might be secured, though 'twould appear the way
Of settlement was strange! As martyrs numbered more
The surer seemed their creed; miracles witness bore!
Even the weak of mind were heard beside the strong,
And ordeal stayed, o'er all, the proof of right and wrong.
Would any win a cause? He must extend his arms
Unwearied stand, nor faint; brave learn if much it harms
To grasp hot iron; or, in water plunged, not sink;
Hiring a champion make a hired foeman shrink.
In such an epoch of fell rancour, rage extreme,
The pious Church, desirous to remain supreme,
Met the recalcitrants whose doggedness annoyed,
With arguments of force, scarce tenderly employed;

E'en teachers of mild doctrine knew not to hold back,
Cursing the heretic, controlled him with rack.
Thus could intolerance and acrimony grow,
Men natures passionate, fanatical oft show;
Alas! benign beliefs, assuming bitter forms
Can to the jealous bring disaster, stress and storms!

V

And yet, if things divine aroused a temper fierce,
A bishop paramount the soul of ills would pierce
With darts correctional. For Ambrose, ghostly lord
Indignant that his Emperor sank to deeds abhorred
Of monstrous massacre, denies him sacred joys,
Dares ostracise awhile a prince who bold employs
His might for wickedness. A Church not wholly good
Thus showed to curb excesses well she understood.
Strange 'tis the very Cæsar humbled by such power,
'Tis Theodosius self, to zealotry can flower;
Bidding his myrmidons o'erthrow the pagan gods,
Strike at all heretics with something worse than rods;
Issuing edicts stern and adamantine laws,
Evinces vast desire to help the Christian cause,
With measures oft repeated, pitilessly smites
Accustomed auguries and old divining rites.
Soon in the villages, his officers pursue
Each noble of old Rome that to his faith is true;
In vain the threatened pagans, curst and harried, strive
To keep remembrances of ancient gods alive:
Vanish penates, lares, even Mithras fades,
And Isis is forgot, and none the law evades!
So learning suffers loss; for nobles fear to hold
A treasury of books, no more as oft of old

Dare read at will the fates; informers near may lurk
And visit wrath on him who keeps a classic work.
Can an o'erzealous emperor that would good fulfil,
Converting night to day, yet cause a general ill!

VI

Supporting now the faith, is heard a mighty voice
So sweet and rich and grave it many makes rejoice;
For neither diligent nor penetrating search
Shall bring to light a prop and pillar of the Church
Like to Augustine (son of Monica) the Saint;
Early of passions wild, as e'en he makes complaint
In his confessions oft; a convert of the type
That craves light spiritual as soon as time is ripe.
First liking poetry, and drama's gayest air,
Dear offspring he begets, having well loved the fair;
Next, as a Manichæan, views in good and ill
Two principles at war striving all space to fill.
But lecturing at Carthage, surely he descries,
A greater subtlety the Cosmos underlies;
Toward Milan being summoned, rhetoric to teach,
Since hard must be the task lying beyond his reach,
Finds deepest longings stir within an ardent soul
Which would a refuge seek from stormy doubt's control.
Spurred by a noble thought, hope of the loftiest kind,
He would reflect St. Paul and Plato, sweet of mind;
Despairing and now raging, can for Christ secure
O'er weaknesses of flesh, a conquest true and sure.
Then knows Augustine years of piety and grace
Ere, in Numidia far, he fills a bishop's place;
Speaks of God's City built upon foundations sure,
Condemns all paganism as reckless and impure;

Claiming to penetrate the meaning of man's past,
Dares tell of much should happen at the fearful last.
'Twixt Adam and the flood a thousand years had sped,
And thence to Abraham another thousand led;
Must epochs similar, now vanishing give way
Before the swift approaching glorious seventh day,
When the saints' bodies soaring holy Christ to greet,
Awed, tremulous, would reach the shining judgment-seat.
Restrained should be all schism, Hippo's good bishop taught,
And chid insistently his former mode of thought;
Whose words were sure recalled by some in after time,
Fanatics who could pass, from doctrine nigh to crime,
Maintaining civil power should liberty refuse
Unless were loved Augustine and approved his views;—
Corrupt, alas, is man! Alone he cannot shine,
And yet, may well receive the highest grace divine;
Nor will God hear the wail, if it die unbaptised,
E'en of a hapless babe! such is by Heaven despised!
E'er sin original o'erwhelms with darkest wave
Unless God merciful in pity stoop to save!
Throughout the centuries, in things of Providence
What writer has exerted mightier influence?
And, if at times he seems to rhapsodise apart,
Ever firm piety clear animates his heart;
Whence his theology serene, intense, austere,
Has brought to many comfort; also sadness, fear!
Renowned so lived this father who for Heaven warred,
Dying when ruthless Vandals o'er Rome's empire poured.

VII

To Rome advanced meanwhile from deserts of the East,
In other mood severe strange rivals of the priest,
That turned oft 'gainst the flesh a sharp and painful goad,
Were overborne by sin's grievous oppressive load;
And, banding them together, from the people passed,
Until, attaining strength, they throve a special caste.
While brutal Goths and Huns were thundering at the gate;
Or the barbarians, invading a weak State,
Dwelt citizens therein; ascetics joyfully
Withdrew them from the world, and no more living free,
Would give their souls to God; still, knowing not the way,
At times could bring about disorder and dismay.

VIII

Such ills to cure or mend, arose Saint Benedict,
True founder of a code sagacious, ay, and strict!
Who, in his youth, to flee the wickedness of Rome,
Made for a grotto, chose beside a stream, a home;
Must spurn the evil one that, as a maiden sweet,
Would share, report affirmed, his eremite's retreat.
There overcame he every thought of tender ways
By baring his soft flesh to thorns and jagged sprays;
And, by some monks desired to be their ghostly chief,
Proved him so rigorous their wish was only brief.
Again a solitary devotion he renewed,
Once more to God in private prayer showed gratitude:
Still, as his piety to many's ken had reached,
They builded cloisters near; despite a foe impeached

And, with the craftiest schemes, could vex the holy saint;
Who, to a distant hill, withdrew beyond constraint,
There raised a priory and gave forth famous laws,
Zealous to strengthen thus the vast monastic cause;—
Ne'er more dull, calm repose, or wanderings far and wide
Shall lull to weakness! our communities divide!
Distribute proper toil for hand and brain and heart!
Each abbot should contrive his monks shall, as their part,
Upturn the soil, or work as scribes, but only pray
At intervals throughout a happy, busy day.
And Benedict's sound effort lacked not splendid fruit,
E'en if it failed to hasten learning's free pursuit;
Nor many a name has heard such honest pæans ring,
As that of one, ere death, saw at his feet a king!

IX

As awe of gods is ancient, in its nature deep,
While a desire for knowledge slow begins to leap
Into man's attributes; so, long, e'en higher folk
Claimed thought inquisitive should punishment provoke.
Could vast authority, with pure religious aim,
Mistrusting rivalry, do aught but seek to tame
Mischievous tendencies? forthwith destroy the seed
That, winning fuller life, would yet a poison breed?
Piety, sore oppressed by overwhelming fear
Of that should prejudice its heavenward career,
With edicts stern forbade to burst tremendous chains
But at the price of tears and oft-inflicted pains.

Should live no rebel soul! 'Twas speedily resolved!
And Earth, awhile, about a darker Sun revolved!
Eclipsed were poesy, and almost every art,
Trend humanistic of the Greek and Roman heart.
Strange became erudition! Who should now bequeath
The fancy that desires around the mind to wreath?

X

Still, if the Church would let no past her pathway block,
Calmly and oft she smiled upon a pagan stock,
Allowed experience to dominate her views,
While anxious what is pure and glorious to infuse.
Soon images assist at worship as of old,
A stately ritual and sensuous is unfold;
And who would aid the true, employing gracious power,
Blest martyrs canonise; the East for relics scour,
Rejoice in miracles, the magic of the mass,
See in the wafer Christ and mysteries surpass;
Through centuries successive, fending every doubt,
Priests fortify the faith and lift up the devout
Who hear song, chaunt and prayer, soft influences feel,
As voices beautiful utter the soul's appeal.
Truly Rome's bishops soaring gained in ethic force,
Of ghostly governance emerged a mighty source,
And even valorous: as Gregory, could hope
With drear conditions of far islanders to cope!
Breathed Holy Fathers pious, moral, full of gifts;
Lived some so vice-enthralled, 'tis hard to see aught lifts
From human categories, unwelcome, mournful, chill,
Wherein each better trait is masked by what is ill.

XI

Scarcely could effort lack! 'Twas sure in such a cause
As spurred the zealous to show skill without a pause!

But ne'er illustrious pontiff wielded greater might
Than Hildebrand the bold, waging a famous fight.
Son of a carpenter, of Tuscan race, he rose,
As papal chaplain grew acquainted e'en with those
Who late tiaras wore, when ever he acquired,
Through will and intellect, almost a force inspired.
It was about this hour (then Norman William breathed)
That dignitaries and priests scant legacies bequeathed
Of reverence, respect; the high scarce raised the see,
While oft the lower gained a reputation free.
Sudden spake Hildebrand, desiring progress new,
Swift overawed the clergy, from their scope withdrew
Marriage and simony. Nor laymen should, he held,
Invest the priests of God; a notion strange that swelled
Imperial Henry's breast with dread and feudal ire,
For clerics, wide and far, who could his lands acquire,
Owed him a strong support, allegiance to the Crown;
And their defection now would surely bring him down.
The Emperor, yielding not, by edict calm, severe,
Is soon enjoined for crimes alleged to gather near;
In scant attire, a humble penitent await
The pleasure of the Pope; thus, at an outer gate,
Alone the Monarch stands, though snows the land enshroud,
And begs forgiveness abject of his victor proud.
Which German king so stung, has swift recourse to war,
Lets Hildebrand see troops about his stronghold pour,
Sends him defeated sadly to bemoan his fall,
That aimed o'er-high, yet compassed deeds nigh magical;
Had left the Church more free from acts of temporal States,

Secured her liberty from others' loves and hates!
Forthwith Rome asked of pastors, bishops, all their heart,
Discerned the Holy Empire as a thing apart;
Beheld the pontiff chosen through a college vote
While grew the people dumb, the priesthood struck no note.
E'er Hildebrand's career with lofty aims was fraught,
Who, for superior power, with changeless ardour, fought,
Joining the noble throng setting before our eyes,
How valiant souls can dare and revolutionise!

XII

Injured was so the pact decreed of Charles the Great!
Wielded the Popes and Emperors puissance separate.
And yet the Church advanced, for there was nothing then
To undermine her sway that spake of God to men;
And knew the way to rule, as who could bear the weight
Which fell upon a soul, damned, excommunicate?
Nor lacked dread Rome the will her right divine to urge,
Could force upon a King acquaintance with the scourge!
Ay, virile was her mood, despatching with parade
Nigh half impassioned Europe on a far crusade:
Would wrest Christ's sepulchre from Saracenic grasp,
A relic coveted enfold within her clasp!
The history of mankind her soaring might has shown
Whom continents acknowledge and the lands have known!

ISLAM

FANATICISM

The while, in wonted interchange of thought,
Genially most with ready willingness
Let divers topics lapse, as asking less
Than candid speech, if to discussion brought;
Still, shall be one is swift to hatred wrought,
E'en, from the first, will browbeat or oppress,
Alarmed o'er-soon for hopes his mind obsess,
With headstrong ire reveals a soul distraught.
Who shrinks from loss of subtly cherished joys,
On foes would visit retribution keen;
If such ne'er pines for faggots, guillotine,
Nor yet with pistol, dynamite destroys;
With fierceness oft his faith he tensely buoys
Nor dreads, aroused, to wear a hostile mien.

ISLAM

I

Oft gazing at the wonders of that azure vault
Whose wealth in gorgeous gems defies the mind's assault,
One who the stillness of the boundless desert feels,
Exults God's unity eternally appeals.
Proving religion's power, blissful assurance springs
From such a thought of Heaven as simultaneous brings
Sustenance and delight! And Nature may seem stern;
Then, more disposed to pause and contemplating learn,
Men show a deeper awe, live touched by special fire,
Roused by intensity, know loftiest desire,
Reck of the solitudes and changelessness which school
Their hearts to the belief, Transcendency must rule.
As, by the Golden Horn, a wave-lapped city rose,
Fated, when sped the years, barbarians to oppose,
And, called Byzantium, glitter long magnificent,
View learning's force with faith and sensuous licence blent;
Unto the scorching wastes escaped a fugitive,
Nestorius that to Christ would lessened honour give.
Ere long his faith aroused an honest Southern youth
Who, as a zealous convert, swift would spread the truth.
That man could be divine! Mahomet trembling swore
'Gainst those who breathed the thought, he would wage bitter war!

Rich in a good wife's love, he dreamt of none but God;
As, half a life, 'twas his, o'er hilly paths to plod,
Though member of a tribe in Araby the Blest,
Guarding the Käaba of magic stone possessed
And pilgrims' reverence. Truly his ardent soul
Scorning a fetish creed, aimed at the higher goal
Of Oneness vast, sublime; and to him seemed attaint
A Virgin-Mother's cult, images, every saint;
So he, that of a Christ and Saviour pure had heard,
Asked for a simpler faith, even a newer Word;
Of angel Gabriel lured such messages divine
As in the Koran's page have caused their light to shine.
Nobly, that God is One, forthwith the prophet taught,
To valour fatalistic, countless followers brought;
Still, knew the good are helped by promise of reward,
Despised no adjuvant, however high he soared;
Unto believers promised softly scented air,
A Heaven of mossy glades and dark-eyed houris fair;
While, at their best, the false should know such suffering dire
As that their brains should boil, or feet be shod with fire!
Since great Mahomet ever zealous vigour showed,
The wild Bedween obeyed a law and ethic code
High, if regard be had to race and epoch, clime;
Making for righteousness and striking hard at crime;
If asking eye for eye and tooth for tooth, still yet,
Unable charity, forgiveness to forget;
Holding ablutions, prayer, fasts, alms imperative,
Forbidding even wine, but thinking not to give,

To some were worthy honour, an advance of state:
Since it deemed woman e'er should stay subordinate.
Alas, the prophet, soon insensate in his lust
For lives of foemen staunch, but harsh discharged his trust;
With flashing scimetar all infidels defied,
To win adherents fresh, o'er-oft on Allah cried!
A reader of the heart, dread conqueror, rude seer,
Scarcely indeed a saint, although of mood austere,
Having the tireless aid of Ayesha, fond wife,
He last in death found calm; to others left the strife!

II

Then followed Caliphs that, in mood as diligent,
North Afric, Asian countries from allegiance bent
Till folk apostate, spurning former Christian needs,
Looking to Allah ever, cared not for the creeds.
Held they Jerusalem, Egypt's chief city razed,
Took Carthage, captured Spain and even daring gazed
On France, remained not there, must witness wide lands fall
Linking the far Atlantic unto China's wall!
Late, Saracens recalling old Nestorius' word,
Giving to Nature thought, grow restless, knowledge-spurred;
Even the shape and size of wondrous Earth can tell,
Advance in chemistry, astronomy compel;
For, first collecting data as in methods sound,
They ponder and compare and then their views propound.
Who for their children made e'en Algebra an aim,
(Would in late days of Greece, have won especial fame)

Moulded musicians skilled, romancists, poets true ;
If fatalists, the worth of energy well knew ;
Displayed their power in Seville, Cairo, Samarcand,
Damascus, Fez, and Bagdad, countless cities grand !
Such Moors' philosophy, as subtle as intense,
Saw in man's spirit part of vast Intelligence
Spread through the Universe ; so that when mortals die
Their souls are re-absorbed, into the Cosmos fly ;
Much as the human frame proceeds from Nature's store,
At dissolution's hour returns to her once more.
As for the mighty mind wherewith at death men blend,
It never knew creation, cannot know an end !

III

Renowned Averroës ! cadi, philosopher
As many another thinker, fated to incur
The penalties of boldness, since at thee men scoffed ;
Recalled at last to honours after wandering oft,
'Twas of thy best thou gavest and nigh every kind
To fortify the reason, educate the mind,
Omitting not respect for Aristotle great,
Whom thou didst thoroughly and piously translate !
If baser Moslems hating science, with a will,
Afraid to lose their heaven, would have Earth flat still ;
Liking thy learning not, pronounced thee infidel,
Fit as a Jew or Christian for the flames of hell ;
Rulers desiring progress could but one restore
Greater than others all whom Cordova e'er bore !
Which city (while lands Christian stayed in brutal gloom,
Whose folk were sore alarmed by thoughts of coming doom)

'Neath Moorish dominance contrived a bold display.
Revelled in luxury, was paved and lighted, gay.

IV

The Caliph's palace, of a marvellous design,
Had all within it rich and exquisitely fine ;
As slender clustering columns oft of marble built
Or brightest lazuli supporting ceilings gilt ;
As furniture in wood of sandal, citron wrought,
For which pearl, gold and silver, ivories were sought.
Without, teemed orangeries and courts and cool cascades
Upon the river's banks or mid enchanting glades,
While near at hand arose, making all others small,
A lofty minaret whence rang the muezzin's call ;
That, treading by the fount and cypress-grove and palm,
The faithful, lingering oft, might reach a holy calm
In the stupendous maze of pillared aisles and tiers
Which Abderrahman's mosque majestically rears.
But e'er increasing fast, were not to stand alone
Makers of arabesque and text and arched stone ;
With rivalry of learning, came from far and wide
Students and sages that in knowledge had their pride ;
So patrons erudite vast libraries possessed,
E'en Caliphs read the Greek philosophers with zest
Or helped the art of music, ruled a land well filled
With jewelry, fine textures due to workers skilled.
There, lords and ladies great were joyous and would smile,
Disposed to chivalry, attentive listened while

Divinely poets sang. Whose love-lays northward
spread
Even to fair Provence, where troubadours were bred :
Those minstrels amorous with mandoline and lute,
Scarce as to wicked deeds of priests and nobles mute ;
Ah ! culture's early reign in southern France was brief,
For suffering there arose, due to o'erbold belief !

THE AWAKENING

INQUIRY.

Ere long the child, if heedful, in dismay
Beholds sure evils, mysteries, which surround,
Timidly broods, puzzled by things profound;
Silence preserves though problems on him weigh!
But next, the wonderment did recent sway
Lessens or yields, by thought's new current drowned,
Till last is heard with clear decisive sound
Life's call directing eager toil or play.
Yet awe persists, as in old days survives,
A hope to reach the truth the soul attends;
The Cosmic search surpassing glamour lends
And e'er, if faint, a wish for wisdom thrives,
Ay, at the resolution man arrives
He will seek knowledge as his way he wends!

THE AWAKENING

I

Determining occurrence and affecting force,
Oft fashions sway man's knowledge, and control its course,
As when the hope of Heaven seemed wellnigh enough
For the mind's sustenance; hence, on life's journey rough,
The good and timorous ever decided grew
To leave a tedious age an unenlightened hue.
The virtuous devout, to novel mood e'er cold,
Would but opinions settled excellent uphold;
Nay, fathers of the Church inclined were to affirm
Only in Satan thoughts unscriptural have germ.
The Universe arose, as truly said, from naught!
Six days sufficed, and lo! perfection's scheme was wrought;
While, as the Word implies the mighty Earth is flat,
There was in such a view nothing to cavil at.
Suppose the trodden world, e'en as a sphere, were round,
None set below could greet the Christ returning crowned!
Upon a mass whose length is twice its breadth of land
Angels had carried beasts from separate strand to strand;
Nor waving crops nor man would stay with heads reversed,
Dreamers of such vile dreams should evermore be cursed

Soon power immeasurable descended upon Rome,
Who, soaring high, resolved none bold should find a home
Within her influence. Philosophy earned death,
Science nor raised its head nor drew a hurried breath.
Should vain presumptuous men into God's secrets pry?
They deserve punishment their Maker would defy;
Ever the folk must stay a priesthood's special care
And all the benefits of true religion share.
Scarce can the Church permit her gods to figure small
And Nature's laws to win e'en force equivocal,
Imperil faith sublime. How may her treasury lose
If emissaries find them sadly placed to use
The paths of largesse rich! And revenues immense
Supporting nourish her who wields an influence
Almost on every shore! With force disputing might
Of Sovereigns renowned, her dignitaries unite
Through Germany and Britain, Italy and Spain;
Unto a loftier station shall not well attain.
Have vanished centuries, and men of mind devout
Approaching papal truth, are filled with anxious doubt;
To members of the Church credulity ascribe!
Thus show an attitude that asks no ready bribe,
But remedy austere:—Confession to the priest,
Secret and oft ordained, whereby are bared the least
Happenings of daily life, and unto light are brought
Concealed heresies; too, with importance fraught,
The friars mendicant, or black or white or grey,
Themselves distribute far; while gains o'erwhelming sway,

A fierce goad terrible, the Inquisition grim
Menacing every soul, up to the very brim
Filling the cup with tears of men and women brave,
Too simple, earnest, proud their lives from woe to save;
Who, tortured tirelessly, perchance false witness bear,
So that the lists of victims a dread aspect wear.

II

When in the papal chair sits Innocent, the strong,
Who, suffering Sovereign Kings not lightly to do wrong,
All Christendom controls; in France's brightest clime
The folk of Albi fall a prey to ruthless crime,
Have merely worshipped God as they deem Heaven wills;
But view Inquisitors wield a bought force that fills
The air with shrieks and groans of fettered, burning men,
Women and children fair; spares no poor denizen
Unless he chance to face the battle-axe or sword,
Escape in valiant fight the hideous flames' award.

III

And yet, if perished so that early Provence flower
Rich in its gracious light; Rome lacked perpetual power
Throughout to desolate. For throve an Emperor bold
Dwelling in Sicily, by Saracens being told
Of their philosophy, that and much else did learn,
In sonnets sweet the hearts of lady-loves would turn.
Uprose this Frederick, a sage and cultured cause
Of good in arts and letters, man's condition, laws;

Aided in Italy a spirit new which dared
Stimulate human powers, not mere for Heaven cared.
Enlightened having lived, in wretchedness he passed,
That braved the papacy, sought progress to the last,
Had viewed the seed well planted blossom in the light,
Till, overcome, he sank beneath the Church's might.

IV

How impious seemed such effort to each holy sage
Whose logic centred in the theologic page!
To scholar disputants by narrowness afflict,
In erudition ruled by ordinances strict!
While all in dread of pending judgment stood aghast,
Scarce any questioned till the thousand years were past,
Or spake with open doubt, e'en if at times a few,
In secret, thought a doctrine, here or there, untrue.
Still, in the ages drear, when monkish morals fell,
And novel mysteries failed of puissance to compel
A confidence complete, and wide contentment bring,
Good cloistered souls awaking, far themselves must fling
Toward Athens and the East; or, by another way,
Toward Cordova the wise, and thence returning lay
Before their friends strange fears of danger to the Church,
Which for defences new had then perforce to search;
And thus each dogma strange a frequent spur became,
Setting the intellects of learned men aflame:
Who could experience oft misgiving 'midst affright,
Doubt transubstantiation's awful mystic height.

V

Early, Erigena, a scholar shrewd, perchance
Of Erin's isle, that lived with Charles the Bold of France,
Spake slightingly of ill, damnation minimised,
Said all existing things in Nature are comprised;
Which pleased the Councils not, so schoolmen dexterous sought,
In metaphysic, proof of what the Church had taught;
Dealing with obstacles 'twixt faith and reason lurk,
Set their intelligence industrious to work.
Came Abélard, in learned Paris, soon to show
The fathers are in conflict, thus distrust could sow;
Whereon ere long he saw his zealous writings burned,
And knew himself denounced, from teaching others turned.
Throve conflict academic, e'er discussion raged,
Rent universities; but none the strife assuaged.
Abstractions, are they real? The realists said, Yes,
Else were the value of the Trinity the less;
But nominalists opposed, deeming what is a name
Or common quality, can scarcely found a claim
To an existence real. Searched Occam; soon to find
The universal is but concept of the mind.
Albertus said, since thought is partly heaven-lit,
It follows finite man can know the infinite;
And next Aquinas doughty to the rescue came,
Maintaining faith and reason no-way are the same,
Whence scarcely conflict can between the twain exist;
A doctor of the best! whom all would sad have missed!

In turn, Duns Scotus held, knowledge from man is sealed,
Except by Sacred Writ, theology revealed;
A very subtle doctor proving in debate,
The Holy Mother was conceived immaculate.

VI

Arose a famed Franciscan of misfortune dire,
That Roger Bacon who must loftily aspire
By bold experiment, the physical to wrest
From Nature's bursting store; was sent to dungeons lest,
Impious and arrogant, flaunting pernicious schemes,
He might his fellows tempt to sneer at heavenly themes!
This steadfast Englishman, through centuries long classed
As one his days and nights in Satan's service passed,
Earning the jealous hate of monks and folk around
Because his genius forced him to results profound;
Dealing with optics, strove and made a sure advance,
Shone in great chemistry, o'ercame past ignorance.
Dwelling in ancient Oxford, when from duress freed,
He left none after in his labour could succeed;
Was a forerunner vainly asking men should hear,
And by his life revealed what science had to fear
When for its liberty a feeble Europe groped
While Rome, in all her power, with rebel learners coped.

VII

Still, 'twas a Southern shore, not island of the North,
That, taking courage soon, putting its utmost forth,

Proclaimed the hour at hand when man should show
his might,
Shaking off lethargy, oppose the gloom of night.
For classic Italy assumed the bravest part
In the return to life of famous learning, art;
There science steady rose and burned with eager flame,
Maintaining brilliancy until suppression came!
Once more in Italy, whose sons would disagree
And hasten into war, flowered great poesie!

VIII

Where Arno stately glides 'neath Fiesole's high town,
The Alighieri gained, through one of them, renown:
Since Dante, in his childhood, loved with noonday heat
A little maiden fair, whom seldom he could meet,
Though searching rapturously, assured her beauteous
look,
Like her soul's travailings, of heavenliness partook.
Given to him at times was yet a special boon,
A glimpse of her sweet eyes, whereon he nigh would
swoon!
So craved he to conceal the beating of his heart,
E'en of another damsel feigned to feel the smart.
Living to sing of one thus his pure mistress reigned,
He saw her image rise, and next from verse refrained;
Aspired, with study vast, to win for her a name,
Unmatchable repute, imperishable fame.
Alas! it was through Beatrice twice he fell nigh death,
For she another wed, ere long last drew her breath.
Thus was young Dante left to find elsewhere a wife,
Study philosophy and shine in warlike strife.
Failed he in neither part, being as one that seems
In general, like to prove successful in his schemes.

Chosen of Florence prior, at a parlous time,
When Guelfs and Ghibellines stretch with recurrent crime
The people's comity, the poet wills to act,
Expels the turbulent, would bring a solid pact.
Thereon his fortunes topple, ne'er again to rise,
For foemen, in his absence, can his pride chastise,
And as he bows not to a penalty unearned,
Determine that, in time, he shall alive be burned.
Dependent on his friends for sustenance and home,
Stricken by fate, he now must solitary roam,
Memorable make the epoch that enticed to song
A thinker undertaking fancied journeys long,
And giving men an epic, stern, of lofty strain,
With moral purpose if oft instances profane;
Shrining immortally the aspirations high
Of him who loved and strove, in awe that he must die.
A-wandering from the day, Dante was haply lost,
Joyed in a gloomy wood a figure to accost
That, being Virgil, led him to distressful sights,
Dangers extreme and, last, Heaven's supreme delights.
Stays them a leopard not, nor wolf nor lion fierce,
Symbolic, mystical; so both deep places pierce
Within Earth situate, in a pit tapering, closed,
And, as huge lessening tiers, successively disposed.
'Tis Hell's first circle vast! they see poor unbaptised
Infants by fate oppressed; heathen who good had prized;
True Hector, righteous Plato, Galen skilled and sage,
Sighing for Heaven's raptures, grieving past assuage.
And figures strange are viewed upon a shore below
Of spirits doomed by Minos to eternal woe!

Punished for carnal lusts, swift driven by a storm,
Gleam Helen, Cleopatra, Dido's beauteous form;
Ah, horrid pain pursues Francesca's tender kiss,
Sad retribution follows on her fleeting bliss!
Behold, the tortures wax, since near, in confines dire
The gluttonous slow wallow, sunk in frozen mire!
Whom fastening on, a three-mouthed Cerberus must gnaw
For his continuous orgies, scarcely fangs withdraw.
Deeper, the selfish strive who showed a hideous greed,
Or dissipated wealth with reckless headlong speed;
Such urge 'gainst one another, madly, monstrous weights,
Amidst a din of cursing that all aggravates.
Still lower are engaged a nude and filthy throng
That e'er with sharpest teeth, a private war prolong;
Had upon wholesome joys turned but a sullen gaze,
Or shown a savage ire or nourished morbid ways.
Arrive the poets at the mighty wall of Dis,
Scorn the defending furies and fell serpents' hiss,
Till Heaven's messenger, coming with tempest sound,
Conducts them where a glowing quenchless fire is found
And greater heretics groan in their burning tombs,
Illustrious sceptics learn, there is a power that dooms.
More poignant agonies, if such can be, are felt
When, in a little while, is reached a lower belt;
Wherein, at depth, a stream boiling, sanguineous flows,
Whither the violent withdraw 'neath fearful blows,
As Alexander pining yet for conquests new,
And Attila, God's scourge, grim, potent to subdue.

Within a neighbouring wood, drear suicides, as trees,
Are racked by harpies fierce, who their soft foliage seize;
So, on a burning waste, erst usurers are pent
With other sinners vile by flakes of fire torment;
Such as Brunetto skilful, that had Dante taught
And now to speak with him a brief occasion caught;
For, if delay increased the horrors he endured,
It a revival of sweet intercourse secured.
In a terrific chasm, beside a torrent's flood,
Through overwhelming sounds and signs of human blood,
The pair were safely led to Malebolge's deep,
Where vales concentric, close around the great gulf sweep.
The hollow moats seemed thick with dikes and crags imprint,
Teemed with well-guarded bridges, paths construct of flint;
And, numerous as commandments in Mosaic law,
The bolgia separate stood, holding within their maw
Panders, seducers, wizards, hypocrites, sly thieves
And such as lived malicious. Loathsome terror weaves
About each separate class an intimate embrace,
Through demons' agency or serpents' proud of place.
Eagerly Dante hastes Nicholas to upbraid,
A pope for patronage improper oft was paid,
Set now in agony, reversed, that on his feet
The vengeful flames may run, inflicting anguish meet.
Down Malebolge's core, the fearful precipice
Continuous descends, till in the wild abyss
A gloomy glacial lake, of sloping side, appears,

Reserved for foulest traitors and their frozen tears!
What enterprise can thrive with hindrances accurst
Of vilest treachery, among all sins the worst?
See, Ugolino suffers, through his children, pain,
And still contrives his foe an awful cup shall drain!
There, the betrayer, Judas, tastes appalling woe!
Cassius and Brutus sore affliction's limit know!
See, in the solid ice, Lucifer writhing stands,
Tears with his teeth and claws, and shrieks forth vain commands;
Shows potency to freeze Cocytus' lowest course,
Setting great bat-like wings to flap with idle force;
Red, white, or black of face, surpasses every crime,
Even can parody the Trinity sublime!
Mind's sweet exemplar, Virgil, then his comrade bears
Awed, through a tortuous space, by cliffs and streams, yet dares
Without a pause up climb, till, in an air full clear,
Both gaze on Southern stars from 'neath our hemisphere.

IX

When, by his fall, the fiend caverning Earth, made Hell,
Thereby he caused a mount antipodal to swell
Where spirits expiate, ere long, forgiven sins,
And prove, with proper works, repentance freedom wins.
Since on its terraces but tempered woes are rife,
This Purgatory might form a symbol of man's life,
Being inflict upon the unabsolved, swift slain,
The great who, lacking love, well merit duress, pain;
The envious or proud, those that have anger shown
Or sloth or avarice, or, even, lustful grown.

Higher the poets mounting, unto spirits reach
Familiar-faced, with whom the younger ventures speech,
Such as his friend Donati, that with love had toyed
Like Dante's self o'ermuch, now by the thought was buoyed,
A good wife's earnestness and tears and anxious prayers
Should hasten his advance upon the doleful stairs.

X

To Dante haps it soon to pierce a purging fire,
And then arrive at Eden, whence he can acquire,
Having through Lethe's stream been drawn with motion swift,
To Paradise admission; next his eyes uplift,
Adore his mistress, Beatrice, who a face unveils
So lovely that beside it earthly merit pales!
With a most heavenly grace, she leads him past the spheres
To a celestial space where, marshalled with their peers
According to desert, souls dwell in grades of joy,
Far as the moon and planets; rapt themselves employ
Endlessly in pursuit of blest and purest love
As preparation for divinest life above.
Dwell, near to Mercury, Justinian famed for laws;
In Venus' orbit, Rahab, harlot true of cause;
In the Sun's heaven, Bede, bishop and Saxon sage,
With many doctors, fathers, valued in their age.
Saturn's remoter realm maintains Saint Benedict,
While the fixed stars have Adam, first with sin afflict,
But, past that Crystalline where seraphim abide,
In Empyrean clear, Mary, once holy bride
And Bernard, saint and champion, know their Paradise.
'Tis he must Dante help with solemn grave advice

To fortify the mind, by meditation's aid,
'Gainst that prodigious light will soon his soul invade,
When he shall see the Word uniting God with man,
Transcendent consummation of perfection's plan!
Of glory paramount, stranger, more wondrous far
Than might of Cherubim borne Earthward by a star,
Or the sweet mystic rose of angels, infants, saints,
Or Mary's vision that with beauty vast acquaints,
Having returned to men, the poet can relate,
For he had tasted knowledge in the highest state!

XI

As a strong eagle soaring, by his wondrous flight
Excites beholders, thrills them, e'er awakes delight,
For beauteous acts can e'en impressions harsh alloy,
Sombre ecstatic Dante unto men brought joy.
While erudition often dwells within his page
And fierceness is not far when war his verses wage;
Dealing with passions, sins, he to the soul appeals,
The spiritual resource of centuries reveals.

XII

Soon, Petrarch lofty sonnets unto Laura writes;
Boccaccio Fiammetta for each glance requites,
Narrates how elegants of broad and witty vein,
During ten nights, with tales, each other entertain.
Now while the lyrists aim Provençals to surpass,
Can move good zealots the Greek authors to amass;
Aware Athenians dared freely to think and say,
The men of Italy oppose repression's sway,
Reflecting sensibly that hopes and needs of life,
With every human claim are worth attention, strife.

And as the land throughout new wisdom would acquire,
Vicars of God assist, touched with the novel fire;
So Cimabue, Giotto, Fra Angelico,
With Lippi, Botticelli, to the world must show,
How art religious and symbolic can arise,
When a kind Church inspires, 'midst gaze of pious eyes.
Da Vinci, Raphael came; Angelo full of zeal,
Transcendent artist, whom, the world has grown to feel
None other can surpass! This youth of gentle birth,
(Nor Florence stood alone, knowing of such no dearth)
Was taught of Ghirlandaio, famous, of that town,
And laid in fresco's art the base of sure renown.
Forthwith and afterward, his temper proved intense,
So that his features showed ever a foe's offence;
Still, he had love for Dante, lofty Plato's views,
And the great Church whose orders he could last refuse.
He prized arts plastic soon; from one had timely aid,
A mighty Medici, Lorenzo, who kind paid
His teacher's recompense. Next, Angelo rare paints,
Can win a livelihood by moulding forms of saints;
Till for a cardinal, in Rome's choice city old,
He plans a sacred group, and then, becoming bold,
Places by Bacchus Cupid, suits another's taste,
Drawing his lines with force, evinces beauty chaste:
So soft-limbed, stands the wine-god, staggers in his mien,
While a fawn nibbling grapes, sustains, adorns the scene.

The sculptor moulds now Cupid, glancing backward,
sly,
Down-stooping to the spot whereon his arrows lie ;
And now, blest Mary guarding on her tender knees
One's sacred head who died vexed Heaven to appease.
Then to his native city come and safe returned
(Long had been gone the French, Savonarola burned,
The monk courageous that, rebuking all around,
Vindictiveness and hate arrayed against him found)
Angelo consummates a famous effort new,
A mighty shape of him who great Goliath slew ;
To admiration deep every observer sways
And awes by dignity.
Turning to other ways,
His genius undertakes huge pictures for a wall
Shall shine in Florence's stupendous council hall :
Astounds as he depicts in a supreme cartoon
Some soldiery alarmed who quit the bath o'er soon :
In every attitude, with straining sinews strive
A score surprised and nude of figures nigh alive.
That hour was Julius pope, a patron of the arts
Who calls to memory a patriot-warrior's parts,
Enterprise, statesmanship ; and him the artist made
Arise of bronze, in robes and mitre, keys, arrayed.
Such potentate and pontiff unto him has born
A scheme the Sistine chapel ceiling to adorn
With the apostles twelve ; but Angelo the task
Condemns as lacking force, in lieu of it can ask
Labour of other sort and duly wins his will,
Draws plans exact for themes e'en shall be nobler still.
Swiftly he frescoes limned, raised scaffolds, limits
gauged,
Forthwith alone the fight indomitably waged,

O'erjoyed at last to show before men's awe-struck eyes
How inspiration should Creation realise.
See! God divides the gloomy darkness from the light,
Creates the sun and moon! From angels in their flight
He stretches forth a hand toward Adam's perfect form,
Awakes a life to know, ere long, temptation, storm!
Here, for man slumberous he lifts a fitting mate,
Whose perfect shape is bowed her God to supplicate:
And, there, a serpent coiled offers alluring fruit
To such as soon must flee, naked and destitute,
Driven by flame and sword. Sybils, meanwhile, surmise
In vain if grimmest Fate shall further woe devise.
Sublimely he conceives, tells in an altarpiece,
How Christ, a stately judge, can cause men's doubts to cease.
Above, once tortured saints, the fearful mode display
Of their past agonies: beneath, souls writhe and pray
Wildly they shall escape the endless searching blows
A monstrous ferryman upon their flesh bestows.
Time speeds, and Angelo carves Moses stirred to ire,
Menacing, with a glance of concentrated fire.
Chiselled is play of mind:—Lorenzo meditates!
Shines forth decision graved:—Giulio a plot frustrates!
Michel shows pensive morn, then, evening lost in thought,
Night sleeping restlessly, day waking highly wrought.
Yet strangely his resources craved an outlet free:
Whence despite age he proved, in sonnets tenderly,
His heart could strongly beat; under a stern, keen look
Was hid a love, at last, itself from duress shook.

Caring for nought but beauty, in the scanty years
Of too well-earned repose, when nature asked arrears
Of needed holiday, art's fierce enthusiast
To a church regnant gave his finest work and last:
Where, if the world be scanned, is viewed another dome
Like the great cupola which dominates old Rome?
'Twas product of a mind must vast effects rehearse,
Mighty in painting, sculpture, architecture, verse!

XIII

Still, in the realm of knowledge, stayed a thirsting void,
Since fear dissuaded those who pious folk annoyed
And doubted evidence of miracle or myth,
Ecstatic visions: asked a surer proof forthwith.
How oft the thoughtful pondered, but were forced to cower,
Dreaded the fulness of ecclesiastic power
Ere Galileo spake and noble Bruno died:
Insurgents suffering because of glorious pride!
The science which would e'en a Universe explain,
And influences breathe to make the harsh humane,
Unhappy felt since higher reason stayed in thrall,
And over ignorance was thrown a guardian pall
Leaving mankind a prey to heresy's foul charge,
Belief in relics false, witchcraft's disaster large,
E'er ready to indulge in wars exceeding vile,
When fury for religion could the strong beguile.
But statecraft trespassed not, its force with caution spent,
Itself to help of thrones, not image-breaking, lent.

XIV

How strangely man may err or devious schemes pursue,
By Machiavel is shown, a patriot eager, true,
Who carefully compiled in times corrupt, debased,
A manual for kings, subtly before them placed
Intelligence and rules, wherewith to govern well,
Arrive at bloody fame and quietude compel.
This Nicholas was one, that studying men, grew fired
E'en with the aspiration force might be acquired
By Italy distraught; whose States e'er jealous showed
Little virility, needed an active goad.
Florence, a small republic, called him chancellor,
And such he served uprightly as ambassador
Honoured at foreign courts; where, dark of eye, thin-lipped,
Vigilant, with a smile sarcastic, faint, equipped,
He watching, learned, displayed a careless brilliant wit
Or craft and self-possession nearly infinite.
Heroic shone for him vile Cæsar Borgia
And Alexander, pope (as much anathema)
Sensualists who could lightly pity's boon refuse,
Or poison send to friends or the stiletto use.

XV

Said Machiavel, no prince should live for ever good,
Since evil may be needed, when for sure he would,
If unaccustomed, fail. Since men are false, 'tis clear
Their ruler has the right his conscience deep to sear;
Let him shun headlong vice; show himself true, humane;
Yet from the opposite, if need be, not refrain.

Of courage leonine, in craft a very fox,
He must seem, more than all, devout and orthodox;
Impress with sumptuousness, act swiftly, once, in storms
And occupy his people lest they seek reforms;
Nor, bent on treachery, will he forget the way
Is to win confidence and next proceed to slay.
Which maxims, surely old, with openness thus preached,
Unto far potentates such as eighth Henry reached,
And spurred to violence. Alas, a charge obscure
Wrecked honest Machiavel whose foes must him immure,
Racking his sinews; 'spite which visitings of fate
All undeserved, when freed, he nursed a small estate,
Discoursed with those he met; at tric-trac played, and wrote,
Evinced a vivid force and higher ethics smote.
He could adorn the drama with satiric skill;
As a philosopher, with admiration fill;
Exploring politics, point to a primal need
Of small Italian States; calmly prescribe a creed
For monarchs vigorous, yet mind from soul divorce
When aiming to advise what princes should enforce.

XVI

As distant worlds were found from priestcraft's power withheld,
And gloom of centuries slow passing grew dispelled,
'Twas joy unutterable to tremble less at death,
Free of insistent doubt, draw a delicious breath;
Cheerfully recognise beauty in everything
And grasp at each delight which strength and effort bring.

Keen arose exultation e'en in natures wild,
That fiercely striving, yet were to art reconciled;
As Caravaggio, painter, graver, all untaught,
Homicide, who a scene of Christ's entombment wrought.

And one incomparably his inner being revealed,
Told all; no deed though dark, shamefacedly concealed,
Ay, could with satisfaction jubilant recall
'Twas even granted him murderously to fall
Upon a hated foe! Cellini, the untamed
Sculptor superlative, unanimous acclaimed
For his designs in bronze or gold or silver choice,
Ere he departed life, upraised a startling voice,
As if, forsooth, to show a fierce consuming fire
Can permeate an artist's temperament entire,
Expelling moderation, 'minish self-control,
Leave vulnerable the heart, undue excite the soul.

E'er, Benvenuto hours of strenuous ardour passed,
As when he Perseus and the Gorgon's head would cast,
Mischances strange o'ercame with dexterous resource;
Or when he swayed, as cannoneer, rude missiles' course
Or from a dungeon 'scaped; or, with a ready sword,
Dire injuries requited, would his foes award
Strange horrid penalties, unscrupulous, severe!
For jealous ire could oft a demon in him rear!

But, all such storms despite, he ever tireless care
Lavishes upon works of form and beauty rare,
Which to a cardinal, perchance, or monarch brought,
Win him a purse of crowns, with honours proud unsought;
Till last, Cellini, braggart-genius, in the ground
Of a great church is laid, friends no more to astound!

XVII

'Tis clear had not arrived, through culture's splendid birth,
Attainment of perfection, all things having worth;
True, minds were now disposed less than awhile before,
To look for happiness but on a heavenly shore;
Yet surely freedom lacked of thought and high desire,
And man e'er needed much to raise him from the mire,
O'ercome the heritage of such a weary past
As, unrelieved by light, his days has overcast:
Still unto fearful ways he readily could sink;
Proving betwixt the ages evil stays a link!
Corrupt and sensuously there dwelt in stately Rome
Francesco Cenci, ruffian master of a home
Magnificent, but who, despite his guilt, from crime's
Severest punishment, successful oftentimes
Through gold had freed himself; for, in such lawless days,
The wickedest, if rich, escaped the faggot's blaze,
The hangman's cord. His sons in so much hate he held,
E'en of the State were they to ask his death compelled,
Who twain of them had slain. As for his daughter young,
In frolic, merrily, she passed gay hours among
Companions innocent, till he worse treated her
Than even other prey; while rumour dared aver
Often the monster raging visited the child,
Nor with but cruel blows sated his nature wild.
Despaired such Beatrice in her agony extreme;
Made riddance of the tyrant, late, her task supreme,

Minded, through hireling hands, to take away the life
Of one had caused his kin unending hellish strife.
Thus, violent become, she spurred to fresh attack
The bravoes who, desisting, weakly drew them back
Unnerved when viewing him. Months sped and nought was known
Since caution adequate by all concerned was shown
Save he that did the deed, who, racked and questioned, spake
Till, seeing her proud face, he would no answer make.
A maid and beautiful, she, even as the rest,
Must suffer in her turn; but at the last confessed
Being entreated oft, hence was adjudged to die
Though some of tender heart, disposed to lenity,
Mercy forthwith besought. Yet dreadful crimes were rife
And culprits went o'er free, so Beatrice lost her life.
Whose story something hints of ways and customs when
The land of the new-birth grew honoured less of men
Than in the day a bard won him a laurelled crown,
Telling of paladins that snatched from Moors renown,
Even how brave Orlando fell a-frenzied sore,
Because his dearest one a paynim could adore.
Not but the charm endured of choicest epic strains,
Since hapless, gifted Tasso in the memory reigns,
Famous for magic spells and love romantic hued,
Crusaders who their foes 'neath Zion's walls pursued.

But Cosmic Force can e'er its favourites displace,
Aspired to progress through a Northern ruder race,
Which, reared in harsher climes, has qualities its own;
Slow of development, in might has steady grown.

PART III

A NATION AND A CITY

A NATION OF THE NORTH

FOR COUNTRY

True lion-hearts! among the countless dead
Worthy to sate the wish of eager eyes,
Could ghosts before men magically rise
Of the heroic who for Britain bled!
Still shall a triple strain to battle led,
Celt, Saxon, Norman stock in war's assize
Uphold a stubborn name and hosts chastise,
Assured of honour, wake a wholesome dread!
Long as the reign of high emotions pure,
Shall lofty pride in valiant might endure;
And naught so much a doughty people thrill
As thought of those that, serving a fixed will,
Loved comfort not, rejecting every lure,
Reckoned to die for Country a sweet ill!

A NATION OF THE NORTH

I

Long past, Italia's sons, dire Romans bold of deed,
Whose exploits memorable still awe and wonder breed,
Despising risks unknown, ambitious, keen of aim,
Approached an island coast and ruthlessly o'ercame;
Maintained themselves with arms and a consummate skill,
Let nothing daunt their settled fixity of will.
But England gave a sign she would not shrink from wars;
Vigorous 'neath a sun that seldom on her pours
Beams inconsiderate, bred an intrepid folk,
Who bowed not readily to an abhorrent yoke
Callous, imperious: with sturdiness defied,
In fastnesses or field, Rome's eminence denied.

II

Truly that ancient race of valiant islanders
Could, on occasion feel the spirit dread which spurs
To raise the cry "Revenge, now deal a doughty blow,
Once more an effort make, and bondage overthrow!"
Easterly in position, 'twixt a chalk-cliff shore
And fenny marshes broad, tribes, that awhile before,
Had seen their chieftain die, would anxiously protect
His children's heritage; with foresight did elect
To make a gift to Nero; which was reason none,
The procurator held, why justice should be done.

So him the widowed queen pursued with stinging taunt
That ne'er a coward thief should such Icenians daunt
As knew his wickedness. Whereon the Roman stared,
Bid she be seized and bound and, on her white flesh bared,
Ordered the scourge be laid, amidst a shuddering throng;
And next her daughters gave to even viler wrong.
Swiftly disaster gravest sprang upon the State,
Since Boudicca, when freed, found methods to abate
The rage within her soul; sent to their last repose
Twice forty thousand Romans, slain to heal her woes.
Far marches a brave legion now to meet the queen,
Who, with long tawny locks, eyes flashing and proud mien,
In a scythed chariot stands, herself majestic bears,
Of naught else thinks but battle, death or freedom swears
As with courageous skill she marshals a great host,
Destined to be disturbed as leaves by autumn tossed.
Ever against her moves a solid living wedge
That drives a crowd confused up to their waggons' edge,
And wields swords pitiless. Still, Boudicca escapes,
Handling the poison cup, flees an abyss which gapes,
Has left a famous name and taught a glorious creed;—
Better is death than bidding tyranny God-speed!
Again stern Romans towered, could islanders subdue,
Swayed for an epoch lengthy, then in haste withdrew,
Bequeathed a scanty sign of those once puissance showed,
Let a new sun shine forth in lieu of that had glowed.

III

Soon from mere darkness deep and northern Europe's gloom,
Emerged tribes valiantly, avoided seeming doom:
For Teutons, strong with force that springs from virgin ground,
Inhabiting a coast in time to be renowned,
Adventurously sailed for a rich island shore,
And mingled with the Celtic dwellers there of yore,
Fathered by such a mode a virile English race
Destined to make its way to the remotest place
Of habitable Earth. Jutes, Saxons, Angles fair,
Swift swooping, seized the land, left natives little share.
Thus worshippers of Thor conquered our British isle,
Whom monk and Saint Augustine could ere long beguile
To know baptismal rites. Simple were means and force
Governing social life and daily intercourse,
When freemen, even chiefs must lead lives isolate;
In little settlements, practise and keep a state
Of customs primitive, with kin advance on foes,
Safeguard the tiny township from aggressors' blows;
As, when a forest, stream or marsh a home defines,
Construct a palisade, to strengthen Nature's signs.

IV

And stayed such Saxons harsh e'er clamorous to hear
In song how Beowulf, the free of every fear,
Scorning swift icy waves, many sea-demons slew;
Would Hrothgar help and so, grim Grendel must subdue,

Whom he dispatched with speed unto her joyless home,
Shorn of an arm and shoulder, in damp fens to roam.
But Grendel's mother next a warrior devoured,
Whereat grows Beowulf once more with valour dowered,
Despising watery fiends who tear his coat of mail,
Seeks her, is borne along, struggles without avail,
Buffets at last the monster on her hideous head,
While she a sharp-edged sword would with his breast-net wed.
But seizes he a blade gigantic that is nigh,
Holding her bent, around him whirls it furiously,
Breaking the neck bones, strikes her lifeless to the floor,
Radiant rejoices now his troubles all are o'er!
Long every Anglo-Saxon listening avid heard,
Demanded oft the tale, and let escape no word!

V

As eorls such took the lead, as were considered best;
Sought, at a sacred spot, to set disputes at rest;
Where captives had no voice, neither the other slaves
Whom fortunes sad oppressed or crime marked out as knaves.
And, e'er grouped villages a hundred men must send
To help the common cause, under a chief attend
The contest critical. Ere long a conquering lord
To meritorious henchmen acres can award
As holding till their death; whose sons obtain the same,
If they, too, duly vowing, recognise a claim
For service, fealty. Yet freemen insecure
At times restore their lands, so gain the influence sure

Of feudal potentates; man's nature being such,
That, in a barbarous age, who comes within the clutch
Of irresponsibles down-tempts the darkest fate;
Wherefore a king is due to rule and dominate,
Direct his proper thanes, while eorls and ceorls are bound
Well to perform their share, joint enemies confound.

VI

Too, as a tender sapling skilfully transplant,
In fit soil flourishing, is able to enchant
By its inherent force; e'er battling against ills,
Perhaps the utmost of expectancy fulfils;
Soared, and sound promise gave of bearing goodly fruit,
The Christian Church in Britain, deeply struck its root;
Still, scarcely could, at first, miraculous succeed,
As earth that is neglect shall oft a mischance breed.
What native ornament deserves high honour more,
In Canterbury's see, than the Greek, Theodore,
Who of the manor chaplain made the parish priest,
Multiplied bishoprics, soon mightily increased
Religion's influence, strove better schools to found,
Insular unity grew anxious to propound?
Which croziered dignitary of high intelligence,
Insisting folk should show a proper penitence,
Controlled them with a canon of enduring vogue,
Swayed sinners far and wide, if binding not the rogue.
The prelate loved chief faults and lapses to assail,
Liked not the wicked deeds of fellow-beings frail;
Letting his zealous rules ill customs indicate,
Remembered hourly lives, would evils sad abate.

Should any mother place her babe the hearth beside,
So that (when boiled the cauldron) it was hurt and died,
Penance must she perform, although her mate went free,
He but the vessel filled, deserved immunity.
As Spartans harshly looked on youthful feebleness,
Stern Anglo-Saxon parents children could oppress;
And alway Theodore, the thoughtful, would insist
Even the weak have rights, well battling, to exist.
Forbade he fathers should, save urgency were grave,
Below its seventh year, make of a child a slave;
While if on girl-thrall lax, so that her life swift passed,
A raging mistress fell, she seven years must fast.
Ah, conscience oft was dulled throughout those ages dark;
Cruel grim servitude on many set its mark!
Though sustenance were scarce, and should a babe disclose
Fear if in danger set, no mother must expose
And slay such little one. Nor mild the great one dealt
With foibles masculine, for them small pity felt.
In humble homes, or proud, men must their consorts keep,
Who should, no more divorced, be caused to grieve and weep:
E'en vixenish or poor, deformed or barren wives
Should certain shelter find and lead not outcast lives.
Should any bishop prompt his flock to dull their care:
At Christmas, Eastertide, sobriety forswear,
Befel no penalty unless the bishop first,
Ere he the gathering bade, fair bounds himself had burst.

Desired this leader good from superstition's maze
Into a realm more pure to guide the Nation's ways:
Censured the foolish striplings who would merry make,
As calves or stags disporting, joyously betake
Themselves to snowy fields, there practice magic rites
That Earth at harvest-time might stint not her delights.
Denounced oft Theodore a custom of the Church
Prompting the pious priest to make haphazard search
In psalm or gospel page, sure a divine reply
To difficulty, doubt, would meet his anxious eye.
Truly such penitentials backwardness reveal
Nor much of pristine Saxon character conceal!

VII

Gloomy remained the age, and many a lighter sin
To luckless woman brought a ruthless discipline;
To strike whom wont prescribed how oft the guardian dared;
The thickness of the rod, such also was declared.
Descended the rude jest that epoch on the dame,
Yet she could bravely show a spirit far from tame;
Might even prove herself, a prey to wickedness,
As stories of Eadburgh, Beorthric's queen, impress.
Daughter of Mercian Offa, to a chieftain wed
Who lusty men of Wessex in the field had led;
A woman beautiful, lacking not devious skill
Nor force to bring about that folk should do her will,
She torment felt because her might was not direct,
Deep-laid successive plans, crafty and unsuspect
Would see each favourite, or from the court expelled,
Or to the headsman sent through evidence withheld.

At last, an ealdorman, young, generous and true,
Her husband's chosen friend, entered her jealous view;
Whence at a banquet, while the merriment was loud,
Nor sleep had cast on many yet oblivion's shroud,
She proffered him a cup; but Beorthric first such gained
And drinking, gave his comrade, so the Queen obtained
Her guilty wish and more.
Swift must Eadburgh flee,
Far, wave-born, soon rejoice from her pursuers free,
Next, forthwith travelling to a high-place resort,
Awake in Charlemagne a notion her to court;
Which Sovereign could but ask, that she should gracious wed,
If not his son, himself. Then she, with lowered head,
Told, if she took a husband, he must be still young,
Thus to a storm of wrath the mighty Emperor stung;
Who blamed her life, but made her e'en an abbess great,
To sink beneath, alas! the risks that love await,
And long an outcast wander, seldom find a home,
A suppliant, through streets of Pavia's city roam;
Till last, though death had seized her, influence she lent,
And hence for long was heard no name of queen in Kent;
Since, if mankind may seem o'er tolerant at times,
Aroused, they sit in judgment, shun the worst of crimes!

VIII

Vile enemies on England, direly then advanced,
Her coasts no more avoiding than from Gaul they glanced;

Dread Northmen, heathen-minded, living but to fight,
For whom a contest shone as heaven's chief delight;
Hoisting their scanty sails, when summer seas were still,
Steered for East Anglia's shore and ravaged at their will;
When, as if wicked spirits must provoke to good,
Such onslaught woke a hero well the foe withstood.
As, in an interval of a tempestuous storm,
When darkness vast o'erhead gives birth to wealth of form,
A ship shall ride in view which peril seems to crave,
Long vigorously combats every seething wave,
They ardently rejoice who look upon the scene;
Admiring skilful courage, energy serene,
In many an after year will recollect the hour
Rich with the spectacle of sure and lofty power;
Likewise must ever Alfred in men's memory reign,
Through prowess for defence and worth their hearts enchain.
What horrid fear oppressed his deeply brooding thought!
E'en his beloved home to capture might be brought!
Should, beneath savage Danes' unsparing fierce address,
Wessex, the beautiful, lapse to a wilderness,
Shrink from the agile foes that helm and mail could boast,
Or from the north down-marched, or chose the southern coast,
To fire the homesteads came upon the steeds they stole,
Seeking the weaklings out, e'er reaping bloody toll?

Longed Ethelwulf's young son to rise and show the land
He could the hideous blight successfully withstand!
Delayed his pious King within the royal tent!
Had sworn to witness mass ere to the field he went!
But Alfred, with a war cry, furiously charged,
Discerned at fall of night, dear freedom's hope enlarged;
So summoned was, forthwith, to mount a tottering throne,
Neglected not his fighters, vessels too must own,
Knew that the arts of peace can make a country strong,
Graciously smiled on merit, darkly frowned on wrong.
Once more came Vikings on, escaping, swiftly fled,
To be pursued, and starved, ere humbly home they sped.
But such return in force, when Alfred for awhile
Staying at bay, entrenches on a marshy isle;
Lingers till western levies join his doughty thanes,
Then overcomes the pirates, and a mastery gains
Which makes them cede their stronghold, honourably submit,
Do homage and, as Christians, solemn vow to quit,
Forsake that western land. Last, in East Anglia's state,
The foe, 'neath Guthrum's sway, remains incorporate.
Alfred, with lessened war, can projects well expand;
Designs that priests, who read, the words shall understand,
Imparts new vigour to the monasteries and schools;
Thinks, as so many stars, sages should gleam 'mongst fools.
He chooses morals, writes thereon, loves learning's gems,
Collects a doctorate that ignorance condemns;

Too, would the laws improve, hence searches previous codes,
None altogether spurns which clear advantage bodes.
Much sooner would the kindly King the poets read
Or fix his gaze on chess, then quaffing bowls of mead
In the great hall remain, what time, on trestled boards,
Venison and boar are laid with much the lake affords;
While earls, though ladies stand, take at gross feasts their place,
And speak of jugglers' jests, hawks and the forest chase.
Seldom far moves he but with relics by his side,
Bears with him tapers long, unto the hours a guide,
Journeys, and ever shows a strange activity,
On everything must look, despite pains bodily.
But, as no winter yields without renewals sad
Of elemental strife, before the springtime glad;
So, with their raven-standard, Danes approach once more,
Rowing in many boats up inland from the shore;
Till Alfred first surrounds them, then deflects the stream,
Leaving their galleys dry, effectually can scheme
For peace and long content. With a mind-outlook vast,
In him the finest traits exceptional were massed;
As clear stood forth when all, from the Danes' peril turned,
Saw that their mighty King ne'er blame nor stricture earned.
Rewon he foe-swept London for commanding use,
Ensured a navy skilled the peril should reduce;
Sought, with a statecraft pure, friends hostile to unite,
Adhered to piety, upheld each form of right,

Evinced sagacity, true loftiness of soul,
And ever proved the spirit can the deed control!

IX

Yet was the kingship scarce man's solitary support,
Throughout that sombre age; for, having their own court,
Ecclesiastic princes zealously could shine,
Doubtless uplifted by a sense of things divine;
E'en if excessive ardour urged at times to fill
Coffers monastic in a manner tinged with ill.
Long was the period when the Church's certain power
Would both indict and judge, then sentence and make cower!
Thus came it Denewulf, bishop as well as lord,
Desiring lands once sold should be to him restored,
Against a tenant charged behaviour lax and loose,
Next levied forfeiture, whence by a vile abuse
An honest man was thralled. And since accrued no share
So to the sovereign's purse, the Witan must declare,
Equity to establish, a successful Church
Should not, o'ergrasping, leave the monarch in the lurch:
Complained, oft flaws assail the social polity;
Morals but gradual rise, improve by slow degree!

X

Albeit, 'neath the mitre, statesmen could appear,
And mould an epoch great, help Christendom's career,
Even uplift the sword in battle with its foes,
Nor shrink in a good cause from dealing doughty blows,

As when a stripling gained in Glastonbury fame,
Meaning to serve the land, morality proclaim.
From such a sacred spot, whereto strange memories cling
Of Joseph, holy man, who, as the tale doth ring,
Coming from Palestine, planted near by a thorn
Blossoming every year upon the Christmas morn;
And whither pilgrims flock to offer up their vows
Since thoughts of Arthur, king, and Patrick, saint, arouse
Still further feelings pure and call folk to the place:
Thence Dunstan righteous stepped to influence the race.
A lad of gifts unknown, ne'er daunted by a task,
He wins the privilege, through music's power to bask
In noble ladies' bowers, whose tributes to his skill
Ensure for him the signs of jealousy, ill will,
E'en wizardry's report, and make him undergo
The watery ordeal, his innocence thus show!
Arrives true succour, for a bishop's piercing glance
Sends him within the sway of cleric life in France;
Returning whence devout, he builds himself a cell,
Because a hermit better should ill thoughts expel.
But wont from such an one a calling can require,
Wherefore he busy toils beside a smithy fire,
And with his tongs prepares the devil to attack,
If the fiend stretches him upon temptation's rack;
Conquer must anchorites, and, if they e'er have known
Love's charm and ecstasy, for previous faults atone!
But an imperious soul frets at seclusion tame,
Abbot and, soon, archbishop, statesman he became;
Ah, it was ever well his righteous ire to shun,
As e'en a King discerned who loved a holy nun;

Nor when the Monarch chose a consort near of kin,
Could Dunstan gloss it o'er, denounced the deed as sin;
Into the marriage chamber a stern presence thrust,
And dragged one forth that caused his indignation just!
Deemed he the Church should e'er control the marriage bond,
And sure coerce if men her edicts pass beyond.
Truly this Anglo-Saxon shone, in tactic shrewd,
As when it was his lot to meet, in conference rude,
Danes terrible, who, showing 'minished joy in war,
Less often than of old caused England to deplore
Their nature harsh that asked a predatory day
On which, for booty rich, good abbots to waylay!
Thought Dunstan every priest should live a celibate,
Each monk observe a pure and Benedictine state;
But he exalted both so high above the rest,
That ne'er against them could, although they crime confessed,
A layman testify; nay, need no cleric find
A rental save his lands were held from his own kind!
Is not a Church set high that all affairs controls,
Would dead men's wealth employ for safety of their souls;
Levies a forfeiture if morals stay neglect
Or charity seem scant, or witchcraft be suspect;
For every grievous act and tendency toward wrong,
Can punish with a fine shall to herself belong?
If lordly Dunstan's name is sullied by the craft
Wherewith he could his foes toward evils surely waft:
As, meaning, later on, opponents all to kill,
He once bade disputants have faith in Heaven's will;

Too, through his myrmidons, with lack of pitying
breath,
He sent fair Elgiva to taste a hideous death:
Yet he directed folk of virtues scarce austere,
In an age merciless, aroused a wholesome fear;
Restraining weaker kings, to strong ones showed the
way,
E'er preaching ethic laws, inspired men to obey.

XI

But still were customs base, evils at fullest tide,
For victims helpless suffered, wretches hopeless sighed!
Ay, ploughmen, fisherfolk were subject to assault
And serving wenches burnt for a scarce proven fault!
Submit must dumbly unto wanton violence
Thralls bearing never witness in their own defence!
And valiant bishop Wulfstan for the right out-
spake,
Condemning told a tale should have caused hearts to
ache;
Of maidens seized and ravished, youths swift hunted
down,
Next callous sold, enchained, in busy Bristol town;
Whose merchants, from her quays, would send such
cargoes live
To hungry Irish shores that settlers there might thrive:

XII

Then stagnant seemed the mind and science stayed
unknown
Whose influence incites the deepest truths to own!
So, while the ancients unto reason had recourse,
The mediævalists, more narrow of resource,

Held war's arbitrament must equity reveal
The more an if the Church to judgments set her seal.
Thus, daughter of Canute, Gunhilda gentle, fair,
Who long had treated wooers with a coyness rare,
And, to a foreign prince being joined at last as wife,
Found wedded happiness may be alloyed with strife;
Upon judicial combat for relief relied,
As champion chose a dwarf, that staunchly by her side
E'er for a starling cared. Nor in the fight he fails
Against a giant pitted; whom he fierce assails,
And overcomes by use of a deft-handled sword,
With strokes irregular. Had won he the award,
Shown the dame innocent; yet sad and love-bereft,
Gunhilda lawfully the royal palace left,
Within a convent's walls sought consolation pure,
Embraced a mode of life customary and secure.

XIII

Ah, vast the influence stayed, throughout that epoch long,
Of Rome's stern Church to guide and comfort, shield from wrong!
Who could her erring children rigorous correct,
Yet in the hour of suffering, tenderly protect:
Ever a refuge proffered whither such might flee
As, weary of the world, a peril should foresee!
But, as the young that unto gentle methods cling,
Require a treatment shall a sound advantage bring;
The English people came to discipline severe,
Roused destiny to prove its obligation clear,
Since Edward, o'er-religious ruling, by his bent
Showed that he held the land for wretched bondage meant:

In sight of foreigners, could scarcely patriots brook,
Lacking virility, his native friends forsook!

XIV

Keen Northmen were then masters of a neighbouring coast
And able sure success, prosperity to boast;
Whose puissant governor would far around him scan
At beautiful Falaise, as long the story ran,
So Robert, Devil or Magnificent, one day,
Saw from his castle high a maiden on her way.
Never a prince was smit so deeply by a glance
As that the tanner's daughter upward turned by chance,
On whom the god of love bestowed as gift a child,
Destined a conqueror and bastard to be styled.
Choice of his father over vassal chiefs to rule,
William well passes young through opposition's school,
And early proves himself in much a man of might,
Crafty in State affairs, adept in every fight,
One can heroic strive, or choose a sound ally,
E'er cause rebellious barons from his wrath to fly.
Now an earl shipwrecked on the stormy Norman shore,
Being held for ransom, must duke William's help implore,
And by such overlord's assistance was released,
Yet took a vassal's oath whose virtue never ceased.
So when this Harold next, by the assembled Wise,
Was chosen King, directed England's destinies;
The Norman, covetous and zealous in request,
With dire and galling threats, the Saxon monarch pressed.

To stay the peril, Harold a brave force prepares
Which later backward turns to see how harvest fares;
Ah, sorely, it is ruled, the Saxon shall be tried
Who fails to guard against invasion's threatened tide,
Even to Stamford Bridge in the far north must go,
Hardrada to o'ercome and Tostig false lay low;
Again, with marches forced, his household carls swift bring
Southward, then briefly rest, in haste at William spring.

XV

Came the invaders on with many ships complete,
(Mont Michel's monks alone six added to the fleet)
Well aided by the Church and Odo, bishop-lord,
That handled now his mace and now his God adored.
Behold an army strong and likely to succeed:
Bretons and men of Maine, North Frenchmen of the creed,
Spearmen and archers skilled, swordsmen of many fights,
Besides, from Normandy, fierce mounted armoured knights:
Ay, these and many more rose from the neighbouring soil,
Lured by the thought of strife, would ravage and despoil.
Lining compactly upon narrow Senlac hill
The islanders prepare their foemen's blood to spill:
Long on a Friday morn, after a night of joy,
From behind palisades to stretch forth and destroy!
Grasping a pennoned lance, Harold, of valiant heart,
High towers upon his steed, to each allots a part:
The centre needs the house-carls, aided by the thanes,
Late levies suit the wings, where lessened order reigns;

And, if such churls but wield clubs, javelins and stones,
The fearful battle-axe of better men atones.
The King reminds, they cherish, each, existence free;
Says William's claim may merit notice privately;
Have Englishmen done aught this outrage to deserve?
Then let them not from valour doughtiest e'er swerve!
If they but once retreat, liberty will be o'er,
With naught remaining but dire conquest to deplore;
Himself on foot will strive, as well, the battle scan,
Near jewelled standards twain, dragon and fighting man.
Remember, they must stand shoulder to shoulder firm,
Allow no knight his way between the ranks to worm:
If they keep confident, reject all wiles and snares,
Nor stir beyond the pales, the victory will be theirs!
Seven miles the Normans march ere Senlac they discern,
Nor is't a journey great if souls with ardour burn!
Odo demands of them, whene'er the fight is past,
As long as each shall live, he once a week shall fast;
And then Duke William bends, takes wafer, sacred wine,
Assumes his harness, sets his men in triple line;
First archers and light spearmen, next the heavy armed,
And last the knights whose lofty dominance alarmed.
Loud cries he, perjured Harold nowise can escape,
For God rewards the good, will a just outcome shape!
Forth solitary one goes that makes his charger prance,
Sings songs of Charlemagne, while thrusting with his lance!

Such is a minstrel gay, who juggles with his sword
And jests light-heartedly, ere meeting death's reward.
Then Norman bowmen launch deft arrows swift of flight,
Darters hurl javelins, while swordsmen hack and smite,
Dread knights would straining get beyond the wooden wall,
But, by two-handed axes touched, incessant fall.
Upon the left, at length, Bretons in sure retreat
Descend the hill; yet, pressed o'er-far by fighters fleet,
Win a revenge; which end, though now the Normans fail,
Hints that a stratagem may later on prevail;
So the invaders, at a given word, attack,
Irresolute give way, confusedly fall back!
Crowned is the subtle scheme since when, on William's left,
The English hasten down, the knights pierce gaps bereft
Thus of defenders due, thunder along the crest,
And meet a wall of shields and axemen might-possessed,
'Mongst whom one reaches forth and the Duke's helmet breaks,
Dismounts him from his steed, but he another takes;
The while a band of knights spying the Saxon out,
With lances teach their power. Ere long, it comes about
Brave Leofwine sinks slain and Gyrth; though Harold yet,
Despite his brethren's loss, is on resistance set:
Sees, wheresoe'er he strikes, both horse and rider fall,
Whence William ponders how such vigour to forestall.
Commands he archers skilled, toward heaven high to aim:
Means arrows much inclined shall victory proclaim!

Shot are the feathered shafts, fierce envoys harsh, speed true,
Display the Duke's resource good fortune to ensue ;
For, one seeks Harold's eye, and by the King is broke
Ere he becomes a prey to knighthood's furious stroke.
Conflict becomes pursuit, and yet the Norman pays,
Entangled oft in snares which Nature for him lays ;
What time, the beaten Saxon urges equal war,
Can for a passing moment do his worst once more.

XVI

Throughout the land then William stretches firm his grasp,
Oppressing native nobles, sees them pine and gasp,
But he upbuilds the State and will not priests obey,
Over his rudest lords retains a sovereign sway.
And mighty stays this chief loving a feudal plan
That gives him barons, such their knights, to knights the man :
A prince of foresight shrewdest, who in Domesday book
Surveys the land entire, far casts a searching look,
Insists each acre by the monarch's self is owned
That high above his vassals stays in might enthroned !
Anointed oft with tears, after the battle, found
The noble Harold's corse a grave in Waltham ground ;
So Caen's twin-spired church received at last the frame
Of the strong warrior who England overcame,
Made a more puissant race of such as, though not weak,
Had unto dulness leaned or else a spirit meek ;
Could yet, beneath direction, gloriously advance,
Surely with centuries, aspire to dominance ;
Virile endeavour show, embrace the soundest thought,
Develop virtues fresh and rise to greatness brought.

XVII

Ah, fared it ill if now the stricken island folk
Ventured in aught the wrath of victors to provoke;
Since monarchs, that high valued pleasures of the chase,
Showed mercy scant if churls misunderstood their place,
Though starving, dared a bolt in forests to direct
Against the deer designed for royal tastes select.
'Twas well the men of London should feel proper awe,
And so a monk of Bec plans for a fort must draw,
Built by the Thames a tower, square, with vile dungeons deep,
That bold recalcitrants might have a cause to weep
Beneath the chapel's arches, symmetry and gloom,
Far from the council chamber and rich banquet room.
Too, raised stern Rufus, where kings Saxon long had dwelt,
A wondrous palace hall, destined to view outdealt
Justice to many men; and thence the people saw
King's envoys wide despatched to equalise the law.
Now, judges, or can treat affairs of England's crown,
Or calm the private feud, or on defaulters frown;
No more stay fault and crime in gold or silver priced,
The culprit's self in part or whole is sacrificed!

XVIII

How slowly moves the mind to an enlightened state,
Tardily from confusion soars emancipate!
As, in the ancient mode of trial by ordeal,
The suspect stood alone, to Heaven made appeal;

So, when the custom grew that twelve the charge
should hear,
(Who first his neighbours were, next, some that lived
not near)
He could no witness call his innocence to show!
Nor plead himself, nor cry to counsel, strike a blow!
Must yield him to a method seeming sound and
just,
Most worthy, nor to be aside with lightness thrust.
Sensitive were men not, when warlike Henry reigned,
A law-reforming monarch e'en by murder stained,
Vigorous of career and more than simply cold
To cleric privilege, and priests' exemptions old.
Such, turning on the champion of the Church's
rights,
Heroic godly Becket, strikes him through fell knights;
And then remorseful, 'neath hoar Canterbury's towers,
His trespass expiates, as many a strong monk showers
Upon him vengeful stripes. And yet the Sovereign's
hand
Had aided, oft upborne, the struggling conquered
land;
Differing from his son's that drave the realm so low
It could a worse descent through ne'er a mischance
know.

XIX

Strangely an overlord confers on folk, at length,
Unwitting benefit, if he exceed his strength!
For when, 'midst tyranny, subjects appear to sleep,
Beset by peril fresh, they rouse and fierce upleap;
Pining for liberties, define kings' rights anew,
Nor let a settled purpose vanish from their view;

Advancing well their cause, to greater freedom come,
'Minish harsh governance or imposts burdensome.
Chiefly to sate his passions, seemed among men sent
Such hour a ruler fierce and nigh omnipotent,
Destroying better traits of his sagacious mind
And adding further ills to those all often find.
And yet a king, or throned, or in his martial steel,
Though he make vassals fear him, each his anger feel,
Lacks, if no solid virtues in his breast have place,
A proper potency; is judged a creature base.
Of falsity of heart, behaviour darkly grim,
John, the Plantagenet, example is not dim,
Making life dolorous, as when he showered pain
On those would see young Arthur monarch in Touraine,
Who being held in hate, was seized at dead of night,
Taught ruthlessly usurpers can a rival smite!
But destiny was ready with a whelming blow,
On Lackland hurled French Philip as a virile foe
Swift the voluptuary to drive from castles strong,
And aim his heritage to others should belong.
Next Innocent, the pontiff, cast, athirst for sway,
Eyes covetous on England as a fitting prey;
Thus reasoned from his wishes; since the moon reflects
The grandeur of the sun, God doubtlessly expects
Each monarch temporal inferior should shine
To him in spiritual Rome must ever tower divine!
Now, to the Kentish see where great Saint Thomas fell,
King John a priest preferred that pleased the Pope not well,
Who hither prelates sent with threat of interdict,
Ay, the recalcitrant proceeded to afflict.

Dragged from their high positions, in the dismal shade
Were saints and sacred relics, holy crosses laid;
There, seemed to give dread warnings of a further doom,
Ay, made a timid people shrink amidst the gloom!
Must now the bell give forth no more its joyous sound
When youth and maid aspired in wedlock to be bound;
Churchyards could scarcely know a ceremony save
That of a marriage swift by a neglected grave;
So gleamed religion shorn of many an old delight,
E'en if was celebrate a mutilated rite
As when the newly born was hastily baptised,
The Eucharist for dying persons solemnised.
Yet, in his fearful state, the Sovereign, nigh alone,
Desirous must appear soft feelings to disown!
Down broke a forest fence that deer might roam at will,
Forbade his loyal nobles feathered game to kill;
Inflicted on the great his passion's sensuous blight,
And all, with imposts harsh, reduced to saddest plight.
E'er prone upon his barons to wreak vengeance dire,
Oft he would ask a hostage lest they should conspire;
E'en sent a foeman's wife to draw a lingering breath,
Said, slowly, gnawed by hunger, she must meet her death.
Strenuous strives the Pope to make the King forlorn,
Threatens and frees from oaths servants to John have sworn;

And charges Philip bold to gather on the coast
A predatory fleet and formidable host;
Thus, as Christ's vicar regnant, with deposing power,
He causes England's King upon his knees to cower,
Swear fealty to Rome, before a legate grave,
In all things possible submissively behave.
Veers now the humbled one again to thought of war,
Yet finds that vassals proud will seek no foreign shore!
So steers his vessels homewards, swiftly devastates,
Informs his baronage hard fortune them awaits;
Since he has means at hand to inculcate respect,
Will loose the hireling troops afar by him collect.
But when the wily Monarch having subtly thought
As soldier of the cross, Rome's succour to have bought;
Upsprings a famed archbishop, that ere long obtains
A precious benefit, a boon for England gains;
Since Langton summoning, reminds the feudal lords,
An ancient royal pact justice to men accords;
So let them now endeavour like from one to win
Who looks on treachery as far removed from sin!
Of goodly armoured knights fully a hundred score,
Each with retainers true, from keep and hamlet pour;
In the north gathering, southward with marches swift,
Travel to ancient Staines, revolt's stern standard lift.
Deems John, at last, 'tis time to give affairs some heed,
Advances toward the river, faces Runnymede,
And, on an isle betwixt his Court and such large host
As to Fitzwilliam cleaves, at pride's exceeding cost

Unto his folk conveys irrevocable rights,
Seals a great charter which the memory delights ;
Then to his castle turns and vows, by God's own teeth,
Not idle will he stay, such insult vile beneath !
But fail all vengeful schemes great Nature to command,
Whose stormy elements his armed course withstand,
Deal him, 'midst swirling waves, such an o'erwhelming stroke,
He dies without a chance his promise to revoke.
Still stays untouched the bond that freemen shall live free,
Only by formal law forfeit their liberty ;
Nor, save if England's Council thereto acquiesce,
Will e'er a royal master, needing gold, oppress :
A blessed document, and boon for all to scan,
When treatment oft was harsh by overlord of man !

XX

Now was a gloomy age, for many, dark as night !
And yet man's spirit soaring, asked a heavenly light,
A firm alliance with the Essence of all good,
Through tributes of a sort magnificent which should
Express awed reverence. So, raising buildings rich,
Ecclesiastic fanes that still the mind bewitch,
Some show the deepest yearnings and desire sublime
To reach a perfect state, when they have passed from time.
'Midst priestly intercession, prayer to God and saint
Drawing together those would grow with heaven acquaint ;
In a sweet atmosphere of voices exquisite
Should have made most, forthwith, for deeds of mercy fit,

Each heard, the mighty Church's influence beneath,
The story of the Christ, his cross and bloody wreath.
The edifices spacious of that middle age
Stir deep and lift the soul, its cares and griefs assuage,
Engender happiness, a noble pure delight,
Display the power of man when faith was at its height.
As the carved stones uprose and many a thought forth flew,
Fresh beauties to combine with harmony of view,
Right well the zenith of belief was signalised!
Nothing of such an epoch can so high be prized
As the impressive forms which, solemn telling much,
Emotions of the race e'en yet supremely touch.
The ancient roofs and towers, sharp spires of lofty grace,
Benignly mark the steps of those who wondering pace
Under their altitudes. Wrought portal, columned nave,
Chantry and effigy and all-forgotten grave,
The transept's blaze of colour and the cloister wall
And solemn altarpiece, softly the past recall.

XXI

Threatened o'er-numerous the signs of feudal power!
The central massive keep, and less, adjacent tower,
Great battlements whence all the country was observed,
So that near burghers, hinds, lived timid and unnerved;
Deep moated fortresses, stern, with portcullis way,
Proclaimed that some would rule and others must obey!
How Rochester and Norwich, ay and hundreds more,
Reflect reliance on the art of grimmest war;

While Conway speaks a King upon new conquest bent,
As Saxon, Dane and Norman were together blent!
Amidst such dominance and potency of arms,
With oft-repeated dire excursions and alarms,
Oft knighthood is conferred on one, throughout the night,
Within the chapel watches, after solemn rite
Takes on the garb of strife, in panoply must kneel,
Swear valour, fearlessness, loyalty to reveal:
As when he shall attend his lord upon crusade,
Or chivalrous adore and help a gentle maid!

XXII

Distresses crueller, alas! on England burst
Than those by which lone damsels sometimes found them curst;
Since a foe sinister, the black death, full of hate
Upon her swoops and smites, can nigh depopulate,
Excites each lord to cast around an eager glance,
And thralls to mourn the ills the cost of bread enhance!
Are snapped the wonted bonds sustaining human schemes,
And men indulge in wild unprofitable dreams!
Arise strict laws that press a small and lessened wage
On toilers desperate; evoke a sullen rage;
While Ball, a virile preacher, wakes the country side,
Demands swift betterment shall stem the adverse tide.
But oft dissatisfaction breeds vindictive force!
Those taxed beyond their due, e'er wretched, have recourse

E'en to a march on London, there would meet the King,
Who calms them, but can next his men-at arms forth fling;
Convince these bold and simple cottagers of Kent,
Governance looks askance at marks of discontent!
Still, had been witnessed vigour of the common folk
Who did not much amiss when so their manhood spoke!

XXIII

Cried soon a gloomy bard, by Paul's cathedral fed,
Who, as a chantry clerk, sang masses for the dead;
Dared for the down-trod lift in verse a suppliant voice
Deploring that the rich in luxuries rejoice.
For sure he writhed in wrath as, with magnificence,
King Edward and his queans, 'midst pageantry immense,
Watched half a hundred dames lead captive, chained with gold,
The proudest of the knights whom chivalry enrolled!
But, after Langland thus on sad recital bent,
One came of vast renown and nature different,
Showed him averse the hours on wretchedness to waste,
Desired to exercise a more consummate taste.

XXIV

A courtier skilled was he, near kin of governors,
Cognisant of affairs, as well as bloody wars,
Had many things observed and divers books oft read,
At times an embassy to foreign countries led.
Such was the Chaucer shrewd, of story-telling grace,
Who fixed the worthiest words of English in their place

(Had warbled tender airs, but never one supreme
Till Troilus' despair supplied him with a theme)
At last resolved he would compelling pictures paint
Should make his fellows with mankind around acquaint;
So called together pilgrims representative
At Southwark's gabled Tabard, hostel long will live;
Setting conditions that, by each must be bestowed
At e'en, a tale, as all to Canterbury rode.
A gentle knight, the soul of noble courtesy,
Tells of Arcite's love for beauteous Emylye
Desired of Palamon; and how such gallants fared,
By like emotion moved and evil chance ensnared.
Alas! what trials sore the twain must undergo,
When captive Palamon, insensate through his woe,
Cries God, the good and great, can seem compassionless,
Even the innocent with suffering oppress!
Themselves the pair bore brave as chivalry could ask;
Courageous and sound knights, attempted many a task,
And dreading hazard not of joust or tournament,
Learnt truly how success or loss to all is sent.

XXV

A sergeant of the law was sound and worthy deemed,
Busy as he might be, he always busier seemed;
In precedent and judgments since the conquest, wise,
Had oft been named by patent, justice of Assize;
His robes and fees and knowledge in fee simple held,
And naught did that was wrong; against him none rebelled.

A miller rode among them, showed a love for ale,
E'er humorous of mood, was ribald in his tale;
Wearing a ruddy beard, e'en square as is a spade,
Aroused the company when on his pipes he played;
A mighty wrestler, this, and valorous of port,
Ever disposed to jest and coarse or frolic sport!

As 'twere to touch the vogue of that life celibate
High honoured of the Church, unfruitful for the State;
And in the hope a faith more wholesome might begin,
Which should not look on love as weak and carnal sin;
A rude but honest dame, working in Western cloth,
To speak of woman's wishes showed her no way loth.

High on an ambler borne, with mantle at her hip,
Full jovially she laughed, adored good fellowship;
Who, in the past, had known successive husbands five,
Besides the company to win her first did strive;
But always proved she free with offerings at the Church,
Lacking nor gold nor sense, for all is best would search.

A yeoman bare a horn, was bravely clad in green,
In woodcraft truly skilled, with bow and arrows seen.
But, different to the eye, there one appeared in black,
A surpliced canon such, upon a dappled hack;
Well lived by alchemy's astonishing pursuit
That could the baser metals into gold transmute!
'Twas he with full display of crucible and fire,
Copper and mercury, had roused a vast desire
For riches in a priest who gave him forty pounds,
And learned ere long, alas! that trickery abounds!

XXVI

A franklin in the troop showed hospitable bent
E'er fish and meat had on his table permanent;

At home must oft, as lord, the justice bench adorn,
Nor, rubicund, rejected cake and wine at morn.
Told he of Dorigen who promised a young squire,
Albeit a wife, she would give way to his desire
An if he wonders wrought. Aurelius, no poltroon,
Recalls the eight-and-twenty mansions of the moon,
Nay, bribes a sorcerer to level a wild shore!
So weeping Dorigen would keep faith as she swore.
Ah, swift the lover's wish is altered by her grief
Whose honourable intention brings a sure relief.
Lived she content in future, safer pathways trod,
Blest with a courteous lord worshipping her as God.

XXVII

One that did e'er retain, o'er where he lay his head,
A score of manuscripts attired in black or red;
Nor could by chance neglect, in manner diligent,
To pray for all whose bounty him to school had sent;
An Oxford scholar, with his upper habit worn,
Of slender figure tall, by a lean nag was borne;
Narrated how for long, comfort and help delayed
To reach a young wife slighted, who yet patient stayed.
Often the good have grieved at meek Griselda's woe,
Rejoiced at last she came true happiness to know!
With them a parson went, poor, learned and benign,
His welfare would for others' willingly resign;
E'er grasped his staff with firmness, walked his parish through,
Left not to deputies whate'er himself should do;
Could not with frowardness of great or small concur,
Reckoned example sound and fairness hearts must stir.

A ploughman was his brother, always paid his tithe,
Even if, humbly toiling, he in woes might writhe.
In fur-tipped gown a monk within the throng had place,
In lieu of harder work chose raptures of the chase,
A reckless soul and lusty whose insistent needs
By greyhounds swift were sate and dainty stall-fed steeds.
A friar, pure of soul and merry, hearts could win
Supplied small knives and pins and loved a pleasant inn;
Was alms allowed to ask, but easy penance gave
Or genially absolved after confession brave.
A pardoner retailed indulgences and charms
Whose puissance showered delight and rescued from alarms.
Exhibiting an inch of the blest Virgin's veil,
And, from St. Peter's ship a portion of the sail,
He taught that ills have love of money as their root,
But proved him not averse to reap the golden fruit.
Blotched, with licentious habits and of ill report,
Was one who summoned folk to the archdeacon's court,
Deemed e'er for sinfulness men should some forfeit pay,
For morals must be raised in one or other way.
'Mongst all a prioress, displaying finest taste,
Was simple, gracious, coy, spake in the language chaste
Of goodly Norman French; in dainty manner ate,
Ran frightened, even wept, if she a trapped mouse met.

Tremulous she discoursed anent a pious child
Who heard and learned a prayer unto the Virgin mild,
Yet, singing his sweet song aroused the wrath of foes
That snatched his life, then hid the witness of their blows.
Ah, earthward Heaven's spouse in vision glorious came,
Making him free of might to carol forth her name;
More, to his mother dazed, the little fellow called,
The prayer 'fore men repeated, whence they grew enthralled!
A doctor, there, his patients could for certain cure,
Revealed, through Galen's lore and stars, their progress sure;
Ready he alway seemed apothecaries to use,
But not his gold to waste or Holy Writ peruse.
A shipman, that excelled in reckoning the tide,
Showed he could deeply drink and better fight than ride;
While, nigh last, rode a reeve having a subtle skill
The interests of his lord to cherish and fulfil;
And none could him surpass in arts of governing
Cattle or sheep or land or any such like thing.
A merchant, of forked beard, educed with much parade
How his success was due to cunning in his trade;
If he a bargain struck or craved a lender's gold,
True wit and knowledge, prudence, all his acts controlled!
As each a story told, surely the bard revealed
That England and her sons unto his soul appealed;
Raising a treasure-house, he therein set his best
To touch the heart, divert, with genial truth invest.

XXVIII

Sadly to rudeness and oppression were inclined
At such an hour the strong, whom mildness e'er should bind;
Wherefore, shrewd Englishmen, knowing the worth of peace,
To the fourth Edward granted licence to increase,
Strengthen his governance; saw, first, depart the rout
And conflict violent arisen from a doubt
Who lawfully should reign, but next, the royal power
Men's prize of liberty and settled use deflower!
For he, whose beauty pleased the populace at large,
Hastened against both rich and poorer folk to charge
Imposts extortionate, heeded the Commons not,
Their settled privilege to vote supplies forgot.
Declined forthwith, alas, before astonished eyes,
All had replaced the Saxon meeting of the Wise:
Abbot and bishop, baron who together come,
Had chosen kings, passed taxes, soon wellnigh grew dumb.
E'er since de Montfort's hour, citizens' worth and knights'
Surely were recognised; ay, common folk had rights,
Until, at Westminster, this Edward o'er-severe,
Refused discussion and the wonted pleas to hear.
Craftily he the stern King-maker's will had foiled,
Through use of spies, the great of confidence despoiled,
Dared a star chamber found, and institute the rack,
Could without scruple handle those he would attack.
Careless and jovial, skilled, such was a leader brave,
Who over-jealous sent a brother to the grave

After such trial brief that on it he relied
Scarcely to gain his wish ; but altered justice' tide.
Often, despite his queen most virtuously him bare
A numerous progeny, drawn within passion's snare
He turned to other loves, and each pronounced in jest,
Of cunning, holy, or right merry ones the best !
So destined was a Jane to win unhappy fame,
Since when King Edward passed, devoted to his name
She lighted on misfortune, nay a-sudden fell ;
For hunchback Richard swore on him she cast a spell
And had her roughly haled as one of ill report,
Having a vile intent, before the bishop's court ;
Hence sent before Paul's Cross to walk in kirtle clad,
And grasp a lighted taper, wear a visage sad.
But as men saw the pale sweet face of Mistress Shore,
Rather they thought her friendless, worthy to adore,
Surely no sorceress, but witty, joyous, frail,
Endowed with comeliness which could the heart assail.
Such hour nor rulers' moods to virtue seemed akin
Nor looked their subjects good with horror upon sin,
Wherefore this famous leman gained protection high,
E'en living long, perceived vast change in monarchy.

XXIX

Behold the years had come, when men of earnestness
Shuddered to view a Church, harsh, cold and spiritless !
Since clergy regular could smile at Heaven's will ;
Nor abbots always laboured strictness to instil,
E'en native hierarchs would sometime seem unjust
Or mild of attitude toward idleness and lust.
And glamour yet accrued wellnigh immoderate,
A benefit of mind, with panoply of state,

And wealth nigh fabulous of fruitful acres wide,
To preachers making not morality their pride;
While stories reached folk's ears of monkhood dissolute,
At service seldom present, but it did well suit.
Treasuring memories of virtuous Cobham burned;
Doubtless in secret some to Wiclif's teaching turned,
Dared pause on newer things, even were forced to sigh
For rescue from a load of ancient tyranny.
Ay, in courts clerical, distant, extortionate,
Oft, for a trivial fault, men sought a quittance great;
And each must absolution at death's hour obtain,
Although the priest perchance could worthiness not feign;
Since by tradition's action, consecration's use,
None other, at the last, for sin provides excuse.
Wherefore distress arose and long-continued grief,
Fear that religion ne'er would win desired relief.

XXX

Though the calamities which enter in Time's net
Arouse our horror or stir melancholy regret;
Yet, in the shape of deeds which vileness have o'erthrown,
Advantages appear where monstrous ill has grown,
Springs a solicitude for needs of such as faint,
Comes enterprise to rupture shackles of restraint!
Once pontiffs smiled at vice, for dreadful war could scheme,
And bishops sought like princes a command supreme;
More, priests would spiritual high offices neglect,
Cowled mendicants a loose authority affect!

Wherefore, despite the threats uttered by those in power,
'Twas well reformers over lesser men should tower.

XXXI

One 'neath whose scarring lash often the guilty quailed,
Erasmus, humanist, from dyke-kept Holland hailed;
Where, in his youth, he would all learning's cause espouse
Till by stern guardians bid to take religious vows.
So, sadness came on him that loved not customs coarse,
The leaden discipline of a complete divorce
From manners of the world. But fortunately freed,
In Paris he enjoys a life can knowledge breed,
Because his verses fine, latinity e'er pure,
Patronage for the scholar from the great procure.
Yet to the cultured city which is Isis' pride,
Already sage, a student diligent he hied;
Acquired a mastery o'er soaring Plato's tongue,
And dwelt, discoursing grandly, loftiest minds among
That with Erasmus hoped, in the new learning's sphere,
Religion might obtain an adjuvant sincere.
Truly such scholar felt a fierce and bitter scorn
For the cramped efforts old of monkish minds forlorn;
Wherefore with fine excess of a delicious wit,
Used he a subtle cure seeming the ill to fit;
Declaimed, ironical, that instances abound
Showing, where folly is, some goodness may be found,
While often recklessness and ignorance compete
Aiding the weak to conquer trials they shall meet!

Doth any lover quake for troubles he will share?
Or gentle maid, since time may bring exceeding care?
So, though the Churchmen's labours set no heart aglow,
Well satisfied they rest who ne'er successes know!
Forgetful how apostles goodness have implant
Without pomposity or syllogistic cant,
The quibbling schoolman, e'er to deviousness inclined,
Darkens, must see the clear with speciousness defined,
Distorts a doctrine simple, falsely can confuse,
Subverts a dogma sound to suit his private views!
Through deeds the pristine teachers won sufficient force,
Nor recked of dialectic as a chief resource;
Asked not if God could hate his likeness in the Son,
Or at what hour precise was Jesus' life begun!
Were he a gourd, an ass, perchance a flinty stone,
Had he wrought miracles, been wishful to atone!
Aghast at superstition, common nigh to all,
Erasmus toward reform within him feels a call:
Treating credulity as a momentous fault
By a severe recital, humorous assault,
Tells of new Virgin-Mothers, each a goddess chaste
With special wondrous power, adored wherever placed;
While as for relics true from the blest Saviour's cross,
They could construct a ship and barely show the loss!
'Twas thus the critic sought to strike confounding blows,
Still, was no heretic, escaped though storms arose.
Daring in barbarous times, when battle seemed as life,
To curse all horrid war, denounce the thought of strife,
He urged that righteous kings should treat their subjects well;
On the surpassing worth of letters oft must dwell,

Loving sound learning all, deemed it the mightiest
prize!
May have wished sages much as saints to canonise!
Who, in his zeal for students, offering a store
Of high divinity beside Cam's pleasant shore,
Gave forth in Greek garb first, so help to pure things lent,
A text for scholars of a holy testament!
A restless traveller, scarce laying down his pen;
An Emperor's friend, a King's, he sought to better men;
Ever a nervous life full and intensest led,
Was spare, grey-eyed, soft-voiced and mildly mannered.
And, through good fortune saved from Inquisition's
fires,
He stayed such instrument as other men inspires,
Since he an influence shed on many a friend around,
As pious Colet (dean, a famous school could found)
And More, sage chancellor, whose active fancy saw
In a Utopia far a perfect social law.

XXXII

E'er valour like Erasmus' perturbation brings;
So keen an intellect moves ceaselessly its wings,
Would freshen, strengthen each who, vigorous disposed,
Hastens to strike when cause for conflict is disclosed.
And as a simple, less appreciate remedy
May the physician give a new and master key
Opening the door to health; for serious ills a cure
Soon showed itself to one must fearfully endure
(Deeming the Church's power was tortured and abused)
Ere he reformed a creed, a healing light diffused.
Oftentime monks had proved strong instruments of
fate,
'Twas Luther could a sudden cataclysm create,

To highest fame arrive; alone, of courage vast,
Display the virtues of a nature unsurpassed;
Flouting the papacy with madness nigh divine,
Narrowly last escape a punishment condign!
Fruit, on Thuringia's soil, of peasant ancestors,
A land about to suffer sad religious wars,
He valued learning's treasures, chose a classic fare,
Pious, emotional, resolved the cowl to wear.
O'erwhelmed by deepest sense of sinful wickedness,
In dreadful penances vile nature to repress
He spends long hours; is first a priest; professor then,
The Bible and philosophy to younger men
Expounds with eloquence; at last, of iron will,
Journeys, perceives in Rome vices enough to kill
His future happiness; soon vows, through life, till death,
To preach imperative, faith is salvation's breath!
No ghostly comforters, with fancied virtues great,
'Twixt God omnipotent and man should mediate,
Since hope of Heavenly love is surely free to all;
And thoughts of subtle rites this heretic appal,
Whose soul remembers awed, even with quaking dread,
His right to sacrifice for living and the dead!
Ever, as years go by, waxes a secret force
Spurring such Saxon priest to take a novel course;
For when indulgences, in the pope's name, are sold
By a Dominican, astute, of greed untold;
They rouse volcanic ire in one has purchased peace
At costs of groans and tears, laments would long not cease.
Boldly a thesis he upon the church-door nails,
Curses all purchasable pardon, never quails;

Nor lacks a due support from folk sore scandalised
By an outrageous traffic, courses much despised;
Declaring doggedly the spirit sanctified
Is absent oft from courts where popes elect preside,
Denies, when haled before a papal legate dread,
A Roman bishop e'er can be the Church's head!
Forgiveness comes direct! Scarcely another's hand
Deliver can from sin, salvation countermand!
Said he, vile fasts, like scourgings, spoil the soul's best life,
A minister should wed, cleave to a single wife;
Governments must be free and clear of foreign sway,
Ne'er let their needed treasure Romeward wanton stray!
A threatening bull ere long arouses him to scorn,
Who burns it in the market-place at frosty morn!
A new recalcitrance which Rome exasperates;
And Martin swift is called to Worms in direst straits,
Before the Emperor Charles, thither expectant goes
To feed, perchance, the flames which persecution blows,
Greedy and pitiless. Still lots more favouring fall:
O'erborne are Luther's foes within the justice hall
By his friends honourable: so, not condemned unheard,
But ever disputatious, keen of glance and word,
He stands his ground; then wise, a fugitive abides,
Translates pellucidly the Bible while he hides.
Thrives controversy brisk until the country wears
An aspect that is wild, throughout the faggot flares!
Meantime the chief contestant sends forth frequent books,
Attacks old usages and ordinances, looks
Toward none save Christ. Yet peasants rose that long
Suffered from feudal methods every heartless wrong,

Whom the reformer led not; took the safer side,
While two score thousand men slain were, or prisoners died,
To satisfy the law. Nor later would he aid
The princes protestant ruling a new crusade
Against their Emperor firm. Wedding a wife, he wrote;
Teaching, attention turned toward aught could well promote,
Define the later faith; prepared to quit a world
Where 'gainst him vainly Rome anathemas had hurled.
This mediæval prophet notions strange could share,
Held that enormous dragons denizen the air;
Nor must he witchcraft doubt who once perceived Hell's prince,
Never guessed science' power of error to convince.
Zealous, humane and bold, of energy profound,
His was a nature soft which near the heart has wound;
And, if in Holy Writ he viewed sufficing laws,
Has any one done more for country, time or cause?

XXXIII

Spread Luther's influence on an adjacent shore
Where men to go his way were part disposed before;
Feeling dissatisfied, would see abuse removed
And their good ghostly pastors spiritually improved.
Still, wise was governance in England; ay, and strong;
And slow would change have come without a special wrong:
A Pope's complaisancy or a King less aflame
Might well have left the Church scarce altered, or the same.

Scarce savage Nero, that his mother's death requires,
Nor Messalina vile, nor Constantine, inspires
Such horror in our day as the king debonnair
Who lured successive wives to agony, despair.
In youth this handsome Henry, pious, frank and vain,
Of private life unsullied, truly well could reign;
Nor lapsed until arrived a visitor at Court,
Anne, of the flashing eyes, fit for a monarch's sport.
Distressed, recalled he then, his fond and dearest Queen,
A score of years his mate, had brief his brother's been,
And soon by every path, omitting only force,
Urged Clement, pontiff proud, to grant him a divorce;
E'en learning that his trusty cardinal had failed
This lenience to procure, as traitorous such assailed.
To King, and faithful Commons, now it pressing seemed
The Church from all reproach and fault should rise redeemed;
Romeward no fee must flow! Yet fixed is Clement's will,
So the smit Sovereign sighs and stays despondent till
Obsequious Thomas Cranmer, using methods safe,
Bends universities to say their lord shall chafe
For lack of love no more; who, flouting all appeal,
Forthwith enjoys his prize.
Swift in his heart can steal
Fickle emotions new which bring another Queen
But a day after Anne, unflinching and serene,
Kneels at the headman's word. E'er the Pope rouses scorn!
Despite his utmost threats, remains as one is shorn

Of weight and influence, to mention whom is crime!
While Henry o'er a Church is hailed the ruler prime.
Next, as if fearing he may recent fierceness match,
Heaven decides his Queen from his embrace to snatch;
While one that brings his lord a plain stout German wife,
Finds her soon pensioned off, pays forfeit with his life!
Through theologic thought infect and even thrilled,
The autocrat now governs, cruel, stern, self-willed;
Lets monasterial lands, the poor's past help, be lost,
To favoured nobles drift, at England's grievous cost.
Unwieldy grown, anew the lusty one must wed
But soon beholds his consort to the scaffold led;
Whither speed statesmen, too, because his tigerish rage
Proves onerous to soothe, scarce facile to assuage.
As learnt Sir Thomas More, about whose virtuous neck
Oft played the royal arms, ere fate said blood should check
O'er-fond imaginings, Utopian dreams swift quell!
Who and the bishop lord of Winchester not well
Liked Henry's priestly claim, must earn a common death,
Fall lifelessly before that devastâting breath.
Yet found the King a nurse, fresh sharer of his bliss,
Still held, through peevish age, that wretches should not miss,
Who gave offence, the block; and when, himself last died,
Devoted to the tenet which doth sharp divide
Daughter from mother Church, the Christly presence real;
Left to his youthful son the newer faith to seal.

Though, good shall spring from evil, seldom woe is
fraught
With benefit so sound as Henry's hour has brought!

XXXIV

If many a land, as France, could then reform disdain,
Nor from a creed depart of ancient splendid reign;
Nearer to sturdy Germans, steadfast English folk
Continued separate from Rome's distasteful yoke;
Crying for liberty with earnestness intense,
Zealously Heaven surveyed, showing enlightened sense:
To saints nor Virgin-Mother now would praise forth
pour,
Nor priestly miracle, nor pomp bend low before;
Would God and Son and Holy Spirit still address,
Solemnly pray but honour e'er Christ's vicar less.
If, here, a mind devout finds in the Scriptures, all
That righteousness secures, conveys the Heavenly call;
As surely to another conscience more than hints,
Each should regard for rites and ceremonies evince.
Ay, comes it, men may live blind to ideas of good
Save of a sort which they but brief have understood;
Even deem slaughter is imperative and just
Of him denying truth as held by them in trust!
Alas! or folk, convinced that only some are saved,
Withheld their highest love from one who dogma
braved;
Or they deplored man's soul should ceaseless torture
feel,
If a few pains on Earth could give eternal weal.
Fiercer than sudden ire stayed temper in that time,
Philosophy was rare and tolerance a crime!

So it appeared a Church should ever foes engage,
And disputants religious thought, amidst their rage,
Since Holy Writ describes the unredeemed's vast woe,
Surely 'tis sensible at once to strike a blow;
The flesh is Satan's home! and those the doctrine learnt,
Willing to oust the fiend, his earthly shelterer burnt.
Awhile, high governance but wavers in its rule,
At first in this direction, then in that would school:
Their bodies reach the stake who hurry not to mass,
Then neighbours', in due turn, that scarcely thence will pass!
Here, little children forced, must fire their fathers' pile!
There, busy torturers avowals would beguile!
E'en bishops on each other horrid warfare wage,
So that brave Latimer cries, while his torments rage;—
Have comfort, Master Ridley, be of goodly cheer,
Ne'er shall the torch we light this day extinction fear!
A solemn prophecy! wrung, hallowed by a groan,
Of import seeming true, as centuries have shown!
Then one had set his hand to toil of beauty rare,
A joy-compelling tome of lofty common prayer;
Erst for reformed religion a deep horror felt,
Then, harshly treated those to the blest Virgin knelt;
Himself in peril, trembled and recanted oft,
Last, welcoming the flame, at its insistence scoffed!
Deeming his end was tragic, even if he erred,
Englishmen, by their primate Cranmer's death being stirred,
Awoke and resolute unto each other swore,
Extremists, for a faith, should persecute no more!

XXXV

Now gathered strength on shores sore harassed by a Queen,
(Mary that would unflinching sate her soul serene)
For hither influence of famous Calvin came,
Intent on righteousness; who no-way proved a tame
Mild gentle disputant, but e'er consumed by zeal,
Liking that all around his earnestness should feel.
Wearing while yet a youth, tonsured, a pious air,
And next in transient mood giving the law his care;
This son of Picardy, inclines from early years
To dialectic keen, but in new guise appears
Such hour as Holy Writ full shines in fairest France;
A steadfast protestant, is foremost in advance
Toward thought heretical. Caught in oppression's net,
He writes on clemency, remains in peril yet;
So flies to far Geneva, there secures a home,
In a theocracy dwells free from dread of Rome.
He sets forth, paltry man in pristine days was pure,
Awoke, through Adam's fall, a vile transgressor sure
Of punishment, woes due; till gracious Christ came down,
Redeeming, through His pain and Heavenly renown,
All in His might show faith. Ordained to future life
Perchance is, here or there, a father, child or wife;
Though most, alas, but unto fierce and endless death
Beforehand are condemned. As any e'er drew breath,
Such moralist was loyal, gloomily sincere,
At times to jest could waken, or the downcast cheer;
But he must institute an ethic code o'erstrict,
Vanquishing sinfulness, could citizens afflict.

How grimly he enjoined to stay beyond his reach
Staunch Servetus, who seeking but one God to preach,
Drew nigh and boldly spake, with valour met the blow,
Being consumed by fire remorseless, direly slow!

Well might have Leman's waters in sad fury seethed,
Winds groaned tempestuous or thoughts of vengeance breathed;
The mountains paler shone reproachful in their look,
All Nature held that love the human breast forsook!

Tinged is a name of might for ever with dark fear
Through such revengeful happening due to tenets drear;
And yet stern Calvin's creed proved of first consequence,
Gleamed as alternative, brought benefit immense.

For, in their earnestness, some sought with effort true,
A faith less sacerdotal than the creed they knew;
And seeing imperfection in the struggling soul,
While wonders set around implied a high control,
They gathered man had earned, in a sad moment past,
Divine displeasure, curses, reprobation vast!
Even they deemed a Being, omnipotent and wise,
Mostly would send His image but to groans and sighs,
And yet would save perhaps a few of those He made,
Despite the rest at death to torture were conveyed.

Thus Calvin built a creed scarce facile to believe,
And therefore prone severe selection to achieve;
Yet proved he, who with him salvation might await,
Would, too, from priests' dominion, feel emancipate.

XXXVI

Of sombre look then some exhibit hope and pride,
They cannot well be lost, for God is on their side;
Regard in every pleasure but the fiend's assault,
Like later Puritans, pronounce the flesh at fault;

In sacred Writ discover special warnings clear,
Men must prepare for judgment, quake in solemn fear.
Grasping at dismal tenets, they forthwith propose
To weigh fierce poesy as if 'twere sober prose,
Thwart modern needs with many an ancient Hebrew curse,
Shun knowledge as an ill, denounce all art as worse!
While, at the thought one acts on shameless boards a part,
Ascetical they show an icy rigid heart.

XXXVII

Under Pentelicus and to Hymettus nigh,
Nor far from where the sea reflects a radiant sky;
Moving vast audiences unto supreme delight,
Before a marble stage on an immortal site,
Of old in splendid Athens, praise of Bacchus' name
Drama pre-eminent, with time's consent, became;
While, in an after Age, Rome's mighty city proud
A taste for tragedy and comedy avowed.
How long of such reliefs the common folk had need
Who speaking Anglo-Saxon, heard a Latin creed;
Saw but crude minstrelsy among the folk prevail
Until Plantagenets to British shores set sail!
Then priests, from sacred miracles devising shows
Wherein a trust in God and Saviour richly glows;
Choosing impressive scenes, with acolytes devout
Presented them in churches, e'en the land throughout.
Therefrom monks piously advanced to mysteries,
Showed God-the-Son the Father's anger should appease,
How from the tomb the Christ must unto men return,
Or a sweet Virgin news of motherhood did learn;

Or how despairing friends gladdened beside the grave
When to them One appeared who Lazarus could save;
How patriarch Noah discovered, in his faithful spouse,
Sure signs the ark's affairs her temper would arouse!
Seeing impersonate of virtues quite a host,
The mediæval stagecraft other styles must boast
And introduced the Vice, also the devil sure
Of buffetings at hands of characters impure!
Suchlike moralities, on platforms skilful made,
By roving companies 'fore townsmen are parade,
Till rise some lighter themes which homilies supplant,
With a more actual life, scene humorous, enchant.
Thus is pourtrayed, before deeds serious begin,
An entertaining act and interlude, wherein
Pilgrim and pardoner, pedlar and poticary
Agree he takes a prize that tells the mightiest lie.
And who is he that wins the strange contested palm?
'Tis one ne'er woman knew that thwarted stayed not calm!
Masques too are seen, whereat court gallants, maidens fair,
'Midst witty mirthfulness themselves right proudly bear.

XXXVIII

As intercourse upsprings, oft benefit is gained
Here from advantages first otherwhere obtained;
And since, in Italy, love for the beautiful,
Links with the creed, research nor impious is nor dull,
Also the thought our life is much attention worth,
Because if Heaven is great, not other is the Earth;
Is later felt in England an incentive, lure,
Through knowledge hither carried and high letters pure.

So poets, scorning wishes of good scholars staid,
Let influences classic all their souls pervade;
Are moved by tales of pleasure in old Athens felt
And modern Italy, and news with Cosmos dealt,
Divert a thrilled attention to the glow of life,
Soft feelings amatory as well as glorious strife.
Often compelled were they by passion's sway ideal,
As Surrey, fighting earl, in song could love reveal;
And Sidney, courtier-knight, of chivalry renowned,
Whose chaste and tender sonnets poignant sorrow drowned.
Arose dramatic genius, would depict mankind,
Draw with intensity a play of soul and mind
That could not tamely thrive 'midst an advancing folk
Accustomed to show vigour, rarely passions cloak;
As Jonson, learned, rough and witty realist,
Who in duello one unto his death dismissed;
And mighty Marlowe sinking in a tavern brawl,
Destined from promise vast, achievement high to fall;
Had toiled such dramatists as if they would proclaim
A greater yet should reach a more surpassing fame.
How memory of Shakespeare rouses, strengthens pride
Which to escape betrays a languor deep and wide!
Dimly his worshippers can view his course expand
That subtly studied men and read them at first hand,
For certain nothing missed around him done or said
E'en ere, at Stratford town, Anne Hathaway he wed,
Having at school got Latin; after going thence,
Evaded not reproach of trivial turbulence.
Early he went to London, showed upon the stage
The feelings, passions, moods in human creatures rage,

Reflected upon scenes beheld since callow youth,
Ever learned something more of life's prodigious truth,
Studied and wrote, drew means, and lost an only son;
Passing in Stratford, had renown for ever won.
Lived with his soul attuned to every different note
That to his avid hearing sensitive might float,
He whom men Rosalind, Ophelia, Portia owe,
Lear, Richard, Ariel, Puck, Falstaff, Malvolio.
Could any estimate the humour, fancy, wit
Adorn his comedies, have each with radiance lit;
Or analyse in part the deeds and thoughts profound
That cause his tragedies to move, allure, astound?
Who saw, with glistening eyes, life's field thick strewn with tares,
Strange sympathy had felt for agonising cares,
Made merry with his friends, drunk many a cup of sack,
Caught oft the sound of words cursing of gold the lack.
Now he spied ravening greed turning the heart to stone,
And now, the generous warmth for drawback can atone;
Mingled with many, day by day, and marked men's looks,
Affectionate observed, close peered in Nature's books.
Seemed it a need to feel a tireless subtle joy
In exercising arts could mighty powers employ;
Ever a pleasant boon with soaring tasks to cope
Bringing occasion fresh for fancy's splendid trope.
But who told Hamlet's woes had known such varied pain,
Blissful or troubled thought, that when in time his train

Of action was prepared, as pen approached to sheet,
Signals of dazzling sort flashed forth mankind to greet.
Who dealt so touchingly with almost breaking throes
Hard must have striven 'gainst and grown resigned to woes,
Well known the force of love, perchance sore tempted been
New blessings to obtain, aiming at higher keen
Sensuous pleasure wild ; or likelier, found delight
Sufficient in his strains, mellifluous, of flight
Dazzling, superlative.
Scarce needed he applause
That viewed in all his work for satisfaction cause ;
Could so the world impress, some would great treasure give
To snatch a glimpse of Shakespeare, if but then to live,
Draw the creator rare of her that spurred Macbeth,
Paint him that limned Othello, Juliet of sad death !
But with his early home, his wife's, his burial place
Endowed, we view, besides, a carving of his face
Who gave a people loved its noblest legacy,
The concepts of a soul can ne'er know rivalry !

XXXIX

Now glitters England's glory with no fitful gleam,
Maintaining a high part, she shows a trait supreme,
As in repelling grimly an Armada vast
Of huge and crescent form, making her not aghast,
Because sons valiantly their dear land can assure,
She shall well guarded stay, from foreign hosts secure.

Ere long the country, rich at pious Antwerp's cost
(Which city generous trade, through Spanish fury, lost)
Knows upon London's stream, as too, by many a shore,
Shipmen and carpenters flourish as ne'er before.
New sight of yards and masts, odour of tar prevail,
While brave adventurers to distant places sail;
Thither returning, waft of stories not a dearth
Can poets rouse and strengthen novel fancies' birth.
Destined our isle appears to wax in wealth and fame,
Merit the influence of an increasing name,
Mustering Frobisher, Drake, Hawkins, captains skilled
That shine in daring exploits, see her wish fulfilled.
Too, London no-way mute in hours of strife or pride,
Boasting its meed of traits to majesty allied,
Worthily now responds to an improving fate,
A sure renown acquires, with commerce fresh elate;
Whose merchants, staunch of spirit, help in the advance,
E'er seek prosperity still further to enhance;
Thus Gresham builds a bourse, while others lend their gold,
What time a mistress rare would England's might uphold.
Which great Elizabeth seems more than others shrewd,
With deep affection steadfast for her land imbued;
Has, besides favorites, keen counsellors the best,
Each aiming his devotion ceaseless to attest;
As scarce forgotten Burleigh of sagacious nod
And Walsingham astute, surely to taste the rod
Of her ingratitude that, hesitating long,
Could on a prisoner weak inflict a final wrong.

XL

A gay and youthful Queen, erst to dull Darnley wed
Whose jealous rage sent Rizzio swift to join the dead,
E'en as himself must foully sink when Bothwell came
And in her bosom lit an overpowering flame;
Mary of Scotland, ever steadfast to a creed
Little with that of gloomy Calvinists agreed,
Unhappiest imploring royal southern aid,
Soon learns, she will not lightly duress strict evade!
Hence, scheme good catholics, dreading no tortures vile
Of disembowelment or blazing faggots' pile;
And strain oft devotees haply to liberate
One may regain for Rome a lapsed and island State.
Proudly the captive, sure her office is of God,
Rests not supine and humble like a soulless clod;
But matches wits indignant 'gainst the practised craft
Of statesmen not averse to launch at her a shaft;
Conspires against a haughty cousin loved by those
Have thriven 'neath a sway that protestantism chose.
Slow drags the war unequal twixt the noble Queens,
Till fate, as if aweary of inactive scenes,
Proves that seductiveness and narrow range of will
Oppose not well the effort of consummate skill.
For, in old Fotheringay, commissioners arrive
With whom in vain the Stuart would successful strive,
Ere solemnly her head she bows to swell the list
Of rulers from dear life, because of fault, dismissed;
Of tender women brave, if passionate, yet true,
Whom fate within, without, most grievous must undo!

Then one that, in vast puissance, such sad death-knell rang,
Grew sick at heart, could scarce escape remorse's pang,
Still, loudly was acclaimed at pageant, festival,
Stayed idol of her land, a source of joy to all.

XLI

Soon, in the capital, life centres on the stream
Magnificent and rightly growing in esteem.
Below the city's bridge oft argosies arrive,
Above, state-barges gilded or small wherries drive
Past where white swans become accustomed to the view,
As when, perchance, good folk a joyous course pursue,
Hasten to see the play, as groundlings 'neath the sky
Or gallants, at their ease, sitting the actors by;
Or nigh the Globe, prefer at Bankside with fierce hounds
To prove a tethered bear is past their pity's bounds.
Though rigour sternly rules and culprits luckless caught
To stocks derogatory, or whipping-post are brought;
In Chepe being pilloried, public opinion learn,
Or if condemned for poisoning, heresy, must burn;
Yet prentices and lasses sing the maypole nigh,
Frolicking children dance and carol lustily,
For all love revelry, the sound of trumpets, bells,
Sports and festivities, the feast which mirth compels.
Stirring abroad, the great a chariot employ,
Arriving at an inn, sound luxury enjoy,
Proceeding ne'er without a servants' retinue
Bright with a silver crest upon a coat of blue,
Attain a sumptuous home, well windowed, decorate
With fountains, terraces bestowing airs of state,

Destitute not howe'er of paths where roses climb,
Marjoram lurks and lavender and sweetest thyme.
Still must they feel the city's strivings national,
Loving the mansion there, experience its call,
Proceed through narrow streets, scarce keep from mire aloof,
'Neath latticed timbered front, o'erhanging gabled roof,
Past men in hose and doublet busied in affairs,
Ruffed dames befarthingaled that dream of love or prayers.
And now, in London town, new benefits were got
Where, long, full many a monk, white, grey, black had his lot;
No more, ascetic strict Carthusians shunned life's toil,
But made a way for those had worked and missed the spoil;
And, where Dominicans had oft preached dogmas stern,
Mimes lifted up the mirror and applause could earn;
Shades of Franciscans, hostile ever to things new!
Your house saw laughing schoolboys humanism pursue!

XLII

But 'twas in Italy, soonest athirst to give
Ancient humanities a chance again to live,
Inquirers, by the use of reasoning precise,
Sought fresh advantages, would novel fruit entice.
Singular grew the need for science to be bred,
When reigned both narrowness and misery widespread,
Oft the strong crushed the weak, according to the code
Of justice, common law; high piled the peasants' load;

When dreary ignorance, despite the Church, was rife,
O'er all impended fear of flames in future life!
But Galileo rose, to startling news gave birth,
Revealed a Universe not made for little Earth;
Poor thrall compelled to circle round a gorgeous Sun,
Himself scarce conscious if her yearly course be run!
And Earth's lost flatness somewhat injured Rome's repute,
That loves tradition fixed, ay, seemed to constitute
Ever a cause for doubt. So, the less firmly held
By stern authority, souls that in force excelled,
Emancipate at last from a capricious will
Limiting reason's sway, dared vigorous instil
Ideas subversionary, would even plagues arrest;
Deemed dragons huge no more the lower air infest,
And witches but the victims of weak minds distraught,
And ne'er with Satan leagued.
Then moving toward the thought
That lightning is a spark, some recognise therein
No more the signs of wrath, and forthwith must begin
To search continually; having become less sure,
To question is forbidden upon things obscure;
Or that the bold deserve the rack or wheel or flame
Who, pondering honestly, incur the Church's blame!
A spirit glorious thus valiantly defied
The principle had long, beware! to knowledge cried;
To help which mood in wide investigation's field,
Early an Englishman, a facile force could wield;
Offered a message wise, showing in tones severe
How science can, with effort, win advances clear.

XLIII

Thirsting at once for honours, favour, fame and wealth,
Albeit, a scholar anxious for wide learning's health;
One lived to whom both praise and stricture must belong,
Great Verulam in much among the gifted strong.
Culture he got from kindly Cambridge in his youth,
Polish through travel 'mongst a people suave and couth,
Even a chancellor's son and to his Monarch known,
Attained a full success when but a stripling thrown
Into forensic war, and parliament's fierce strife;
Of brilliant parts, refusing then nor late in life,
To climb through others' help, even a plan forsake,
Did folk of lofty post thereto exception take.
Who ever of man's powers and mental progress dreamed,
Astutely for himself with sure persistence schemed;
Yet, though for long without advantages of purse,
A spirit showed to prudence, niggard ways averse.
And, when his patron friend impulsive, generous,
Through reckless folly reached a plight calamitous;
Bacon shrewd snatched the task of speaking for the State,
With cogent words sent Essex to an awful fate.
'Tis said, he strained to hear important details lacked
When a poor minister of hoary age was racked;
E'en, as high chancellor, having a verdict given,
Called yet a trial new, because the voice of Heaven
Such asked through those in power. And broken, last, he fell
O'erwhelmed with shame, remorse, and agonies of hell,

Convicted by his peers that he had gifts received
From suitors in his court.
But triumphs were achieved
By one that briefly essays sagest, tersely writ,
Then, to a single tome all knowledge would commit.
And, having found the early schoolmen's toil was vain,
Who logically strove false victories to gain,
He through a wondrous stroke could alter wisdom's course,
Apply to sciences a philosophic force.
Zealously Bacon sought an impetus to lend
Unto the acquisition of a plan should send
Mankind to pathways safest, treasured well the theme
And gave it such attention, potent grew his scheme;
Must dominate the thought of those too prone to look
But at things seen before, who scarce the past forsook.
Lucidly laid he bare each pitfall for a mind
That would explore afresh; was fearful it should, blind
Start from a faulty base. Approach in doubt, suspense;
Test, weigh, divide, said he, collected evidence;
Set against theories facts; what is correct first own,
And then by reasoning pass to truths as yet unknown!
Aware the greatest can think hastily and ill,
He helped inquirers all; just methods would instil,
This master whom the world has recognition lent,
Despite he was from virtue through man's frailty bent!
Ah, misery extreme and tragic happening rare,
That one of puissant nature punishment must share,
Who with sagacity inspired a coming Age,
Shone with the mightiest e'er adorned the human stage!
But, having traits unequal, some of vast resource,
Escape not weaknesses within a lifetime's course,

E'en, showing blemishes which lesser men beguile,
Hint that our race will stay imperfect for a while!

XLIV

That era, Sovereign James, endowed with learning quaint,
Although in morals something weaker than a saint,
Inspires a wish in sober citizens sincere
To flee at any cost beyond his rule severe;
Ay, brave wide Ocean's power, found peacefully a home
Where upon God to muse; for newer pastures roam,
Maintain in psalmody enjoyment at its height,
And banish heedlessness, shun every gay delight.
Yet Mary Stuart's son of arbitrary will,
(Little magnanimous; even, in time, must kill
A Raleigh blest with force by nothing was abate
In letters as in life, save the last stroke of fate)
Loved with display of wisdom to admonish all,
Sinners unlike himself to righteousness recall.

XLV

A prey to horrid dread of coming punishment,
Scarce smiled the Puritan, no thought to pleasure lent;
Indulging a faint hope of 'scaping wrath divine,
Bore himself gloomily, spake with a nasal whine;
So hatred roused in those who loved the joys of Earth,
Held genial honest effort has its proper worth.
Alas! soon ruling powers bestir them to oppress
This moral folk austere, that, in their naughtiness,
E'er shrink from Sabbath sports after the morning's use
Of pious ceremonies and Heavenly praise profuse.

Still, Stuarts must uphold the vogue of royal might,
E'en if the dutiful they place in horrid plight,
Wherefore the sturdy Commons grievous wrong oppose,
And dies their Speaker captive; 'midst continuous throes,
Strong members valiant earn for ever high renown,
Daring upon an impost questionable to frown.
Arming, a Prince ere long took on him sharp to threat
A senate well aware how dangers it beset,
Till (stirred by contests o'er the throne's prerogative
And right of Englishmen, but fairly taxed, to live)
Valorous champions towered and paths grew red with blood,
Heard were cries passionate, violence seemed in flood,
Subsiding not before the victory was won
And better governance in many things begun.
When Laud succeeded not, who consciences would hush,
Nor Strafford struck the mark, caring the brave to crush,
Swiftly militia rose and trained bands exercised,
The rich gave treasure and the poor whate'er they prized.
How deep were women moved who their petitions bore
Saying, Christ purchased them like men by suffering sore!
Such deemed it bliss to die nigh husbands for the cause,
Sustain a conflict sharp for sound and happy laws!
Sang poets cavalier that kings deserve to sway
O'er subjects kind permitted gloriously to obey!
And in the manor house and castle oft were heard
The strains of royalists against malignants stirred.
Then writers scurrilous, in journals newly hatched,
Awoke the villagers, such influences matched,

Until the serving-man, mechanic or rude boor,
Like the apprentice showed in homage he was poor.

XLVI

Now, from religious zeal, a strength immense can spring,
And faith doth unto will a re-inforcement bring,
As Cromwell then displayed, who with a task the same
As that of lawful kings, was Sovereign save in name.
Like many patriots, he was of landed folk
Nor high nor low the son ; whose mother sudden woke
And viewed her babe held fast, fondled upon the roof
By an ape giving thus of a charmed life the proof!
Grew he reserved whose death would not have filled with grief
His parents, if harsh fate had willed him a life brief;
Awhile, in early manhood, rural paths dull trod,
In comity with mystics, solemn worshipped God.
Uprose such Oliver, within the senate, soon
And strove unceasingly for mighty freedom's boon,
Ever discoursed with fervour, so that men were stirred,
His voice untunable with rapt attention heard.
Assembles he for conflict sternest Ironsides,
God-fearing men, a thousand ; calm in them confides,
Shows him at once a bold, resourceful conqueror,
Loves peril at its height ; although unversed in war,
Charges, at Marston, valiant Rupert on the left
And snatches fortune back from foes like stubble cleft!
With chosen horsemen, next, on Naseby's bloody field
Turns on the king and makes him mournfully to yield!
By Leslie's troops hemmed in, worn out at fierce Dunbar,
Cromwell yet drives with point of pike the Scotsmen far;

Yet, as the royal host would southward seek release,
Toward Worcester he pursues, beholds the kingship cease
Soon as his comrades learn but Charles's death can save
Their liberties; themselves, from a too-certain grave!
So, grimly resolute, their Monarch they impeach
And, for his crimes, decide his head the block shall reach.
Dismissing an effete, e'en hostile parliament,
Now Cromwell all directs with method diligent,
Draws on a Council's aid (and though the Commons' House
Nor registers his wish, nor trembles as a mouse
Before his sovereign will) nigh lone can good expound,
In home affairs or far, reigns autocrat renowned.
He makes through admirals his country newly feared,
So that respect is shown where merchantmen are steered;
Desires to shield all Protestants from wrongful law,
Even the Vaudois, far, from persecution's claw;
Grown less fanatic, can with gentle rigour rule,
Since power nigh absolute has proved the rarest school
For one perchance conceives remorse for Drogheda's slain,
Whom Wexford may have brought a haunted, tortured brain!
Thus, with high qualities, he broadcast sows relief;
Of all e'er swayed our land, in puissance stays the chief!

XLVII

But when his soul had fled, its influence sure waned,
And England fell, ah swiftly, from a height attained!
The Monarch loves to bear a spaniel on his arm,

Enjoys at once of several mistresses the charm,
Maintains not native honour, gold takes from o'er sea;
Benignly deigns to sup while servants bend the knee.
Of such a lord is something caught without reserve
Because a diarist, who scarce from truth can swerve,
In cypher writes his thoughts anent or small or great,
As to his own affairs is frank and intimate;
As how himself has sinned and gifts made to his wife,
Slumbered at church or there repeated gossip rife;
Sped thither rich to feast upon a damsel's looks;
Struck now a serving-wench for faults he never brooks.
But Samuel Pepys must often here or there digress,
Zealous narrating, hint his Sovereign's feebleness;
Divulge how dignity has vanished but in name
'Midst court corruption, life o'erburdened not with shame.
Where starving actors once were punished or suppressed,
Drear vice is paramount and audiences show zest;
While, with vile statute laws, tyrannic instruments,
Authority must curb, bring as it were to sense
Cleric recalcitrants: still, lets some good prevail,
Says prisoners ne'er shall stay for long untried in gaol.

XLVIII

Praises a poet soon mind-freedom without stint,
Sees won the right that all, unlicensed, shall imprint;
Lets threat of foreign vessels, nor the plague's foul breath,
Nor London's fearful fire, daunt him with thought of death.
He worships stern ideals, remains unreconciled
To wont degenerate and soulless methods wild;

Despite orbs sightless, can in lofty song protest,
Would evil from the land by epic teaching wrest.
When Nature Milton planned, surely inspired, she said,
Sublimity with art magnificent should wed;
Designed a bard austere, heroic, to compete
With laureates profane, nimble, of light conceit.
A thoughtful sire preserved the youth from every care,
While Cambridge, for her boons, received a treasure rare;
Next, London shelter gave to lettered tastes anew,
Or quiet country fields secured contentment true,
Till poesie's fresh choice, select of Heaven, must flee,
The home of Dante visit, land of Virgil see;
Since one, in early years won lyric victories,
Still aimed, with rhythmic force, his soul and God to please!
Scarce from polemic stern in England he forbore
That oft with trenchant words evinced a power for war;
But o'er-assiduous grew in service of the State,
Alas! a victim fell to blindness desperate.
'Tis then this Puritan illustrious most shines!
Has plumbed life's depths, yet harbours vigorous designs,
Unto imperious love having thrice fallen prey,
Chanced upon happiness, more discord's horrid sway,
Sets forth before the world the fruit of all his gifts,
Contemns a vapid Age, strives and an epoch lifts.
Since, seeking to convey how, in a blest abode,
Our primal parents erst succumbed to evil's load,
He subtly, in his song, mellifluous would press
That naught avails apart from Heaven's mightiness.

With pomp and circumstance and imagery choice,
Allusion manifold, he lifts a wondrous voice,
Sings of rebellious angels waging impious war,
Shows the archfiend, o'ercome, must sink through chaos far
(Even to Hell from Heaven) first is to awake
And next, Beelzebub, upon a flaming lake.
Can raise such pair, in Pandemonium's council called,
A plot against the Godhead, prove them not appalled.
Speak Moloch, Mammon, Belial: swift the scheme is hatched,
And proud exultant Satan to the work dispatched
Who scuds betwixt the shining glories of the sky,
A harbinger revengeful, anxious to espy
Lastly our little world, of purpose set to seek
Man's generation new, Hell's scheme upon it wreak!
Calm, watchful, God above, perceives the daring flight,
Unto His only Son, high seated on His right,
Turns, of sad countenance proves Heaven was ever just,
Without unfairness man into temptation thrust;
That, being free, should ills surmount, nor need the grace
The Deity may show His anger to efface.
Though God remembers man might stammer an excuse,
While Satan none can bring, for none did him seduce;
Die must man now and his, and be to dolour sent
Save forthwith one is found to bear the punishment!
Dread ransom marvellous! The Sire accepts the Son,
Whose worship by a choir seraphic is begun!

Speeding along the fiend o'ertakes the solar disc,
In a good angel's guise limits detection's risk;
Approaches Eden and has qualms, misgivings nice,
But spurs his heart and breathes in bowered Paradise;
In form a cormorant, perched on the tree of life,
The cause of every ill and agent of all strife,
Regretfully, with awe, peers at the perfect shape
Of man and woman, vows they shall not him escape;
O'erhears their converse sweet, soft, exquisite and pure,
Consumed by jealous pangs, can scarce the scene endure:
Fails not, at nightfall, nigh the slumbering Eve to glide,
Implant in her ambition, vanity, false pride!
Then the All-wise, desirous Adam to forewarn
And gentle untaught Eve of trials to be borne,
Sends Raphael, pre-admonished seraph, genial, kind,
That they are free, the pair impressive to remind;
As well, that absolute obedience is God's due,
With stout resistance, should a foeman steal in view!
Proclaims the messenger to Adam's wondering ear
Mutinous Satan's nature, all his vile career
Who lately led a host furnished with burning darts,
Arrows innumerable, and thunder that imparts
Awed consternation wide, with engines huge and fierce,
Belching forth devastation, Heavenly ranks to pierce.
Such leader dared aspire good Michael to arraign,
Though the archangel's sword cleft Satan's soon in twain;
Yet was the Saint perplexed, made monstrous mountains fall,
Let promontories hold a gruesome festival,

Still, could not win the day. The Sire all such detects
And the most puissant Son to take command elects:
Who in lone majesty, with chariot wheels aflame
And thunders in his hand, victor forthwith became;
Rooting out utterly those venturing to conspire,
Condemned them each to suffer endless torture dire.
Aroused is simple Adam, and asks more to know,
As how himself arose and much else Heaven below;
Hears, with awed wonder, vast Creation's thrilling tale,
Longer but like to that inquirers cannot fail
To find in Holy Writ.
Thereon, he speaks in turn,
Tells he had come for fit society to yearn;
And valiantly to God, complained of solitude.
Acquired a beauteous mate with perfect love imbued,
The which grew mutual; and how the nuptials sped,
Brought many pleasant moments unto those were wed;
Not but he highest prized joint harmony of mind
And frequent trivial acts of daily life refined.
Then Raphael, him requites with admonition sound,
Exclaims farewell, forsakes for Heaven lower ground.
Although, by Gabriel's threat from Eden's confines driven,
Soon, Satan girdling Earth, has with the darkness striven
And, clad in mist, arrives again, can crafty steal
Within a serpent sleeping, so himself reveal
To solitary Eve.
She, wondering at his speech
And weighty argument, a favour thinks to reach;

Covets to taste the fruit which, bringing generous might,
Hangs on a tree forbid to mortals' appetite,
Of knowledge, good and ill, exists the potent source!
Thereto has trembling Eve, allured, at last recourse,
Eats and such apples holds specially to be blest,
And, carrying one, has next to Adam all confessed;
Who, pausing long, yet deems he should not weakly leave
Woman alone the wrath of Heaven to receive.
Thus comes an alteration in their carnal love
Whose happiness is more; an ecstasy above
That earlier vouchsafed. But, naked they appear;
And leafy aprons make a conscience sad to cheer.
Albeit, less throbs heart with heart, sees eye with eye!
Snapped is the bond of erst consummate sympathy!
On sinners miserable, whose fate it was to fall
From altitude to depth, ever beyond recall,
Then the All-wise pronounced, the Son should sentence pass;
And thus he judged;—the serpent, lowest of his class,
Should on his stomach crawl: the man and woman learn
Sorrow, pain, hardship vast, to primal dust return!
E'er hastens Satan on, to Hell's assembly flies,
From a high sumptuous throne, of his crowned enterprise
A glowing picture draws, but strangely rouses scorn,
Shrinks 'neath contempt extreme; at once by anguish torn,

Himself, a serpent huge, lists to a serpent throng,
Mean, hideous, many-formed, hissing a strident song!
Still worse, without, (by magic art the fiends being changed
To monsters sibilant) Hell's occupants are ranged
In a fruit-laden grove, wherein they know not peace,
Chew bitter ashes till the years secure release;
Then gaunt and famished, hoarse, with ceaseless writhing spent,
Resume their pristine shape and lessened punishment.
To awestruck Adam, God in vision deigns to show
Prophetic instances of future earthly woe;
Redemption's mystery unto his mind is brought;
Messiah's second advent, preordained, clear taught.
Not that such parents walked with all their sins forgiven;
For expiation they with suffering, grief, have striven,
By Michael stern are grasped, led forth, a guilty pair
That for their wilful crime must dread expulsion bear.
A band of cherubim, assuming stations just,
Protect the Paradise has known a broken trust
And, near, high oscillates a fearful flaming sword;
Alone the twain are left to work out God's award!
What mastery is here! The daring gorgeous tale
Nigh making other poems, by its side, to pale,
Enriched with many a beauty and oft-changing view,
Sombre, at times, to give its gems a brighter hue,
Surely and ever since men's admiration gained
For vigour, stateliness and noble thought sustained.

XLIX

Yet, changeful fashion mocked, decided it would ban
Austerity of tone and all things puritan;

Showed it disposed at each extravagance to smile,
Such as belief in witches leagued with Satan vile.
Letting their vision fall on things of surest worth,
The mass of men decide to make the best of Earth,
And ere the Monarch gay, with deprecation, draws
A last and lingering breath, is seen advance in laws,
E'en a superior knowledge asks to be admit
Where many a speech is charged with ribaldry and wit.
Too, casts the polished scholar far and wide his glance,
And the philosopher, sure levelling a lance,
Would strike at superstition; in a manner new,
Reflect and then discuss, discover maxims true.
Meanwhile religious pastors, if insistent less,
Instil morality, yet they must suffer stress,
Submitting tamely not, know many a troubled hour
Because a government harsh exercises power.
And folk successfully the royal might dispute,
Reject authority extreme and absolute;
Or would to pressing questions gain an answer clear,
Of attitude alert, desire the barque to steer
Freighted with human hopes; belittle light divine,
To mental force and knowledge the chief weight assign.
In Westminster the pious, sage, together drew,
And said such souls are saved as take the Church's view.
But often men inquired in secrecy, alone,
The nature of a God, apart from traits their own;
Knowing vast wonderment, fear, reverence and awe,
Even conceived a reign of universal law!
Placing an intricate theology apart,
Descartes held Cosmos from a will divine must start;
Setting the sacred books, Buddha, e'en Christ, aside,
To argue God's existence logically tried;

Forgot not, at the outset, skilfully to prove,
Aright from premises, sound reasoning must move;
While asking disputants each notion to discard
Which critics sensible as faulty could regard.
Though cautious Aristotle Nature's signs observed;
And Verulam advised, investigators nerved;
And both arranged the facts they gathered for sound use;
Descartes forthwith assumed and then would all deduce!
Nor proof is there, maintained he, human beings exist,
Save that they ponder, think: such testimony missed
As that, far separate minds show unanimity
Concerning what is viewed on mountain, plain or sea!
He deemed, the clearly thought indubitably is true!
From inward processes exact conclusions drew!
Although continually imagination works
And fiction is believed and ever error lurks,
Abounds crude reasoning; and ignorance of things,
From prejudice and bias and ill premiss, springs!
Gravely the sage contends:—faultiness being extreme,
Its very opposite can be no empty dream;
On terms then pauses not, scant definitions gives,
Cries, see perfection proved! A perfect Being lives!
Still, he had dared to probe, and bold for reasons look;
Hence from his glorious day, knowledge an impulse took:
Who would an early brave philosophy construct,
From a whole Age reproach of sluggishness had plucked.

Could English champions well display a milder
mien?
Cogent in argument, of lucid tone and keen,
Now Thomas Hobbes, the cursed by puritan and
priest,
Through a long troublous life showed zeal that never
ceased;
Oft sheltered 'neath the ægis of a kindly Court,
E'er scorning every threat, revealed a valiant port.
As it to him appeared:—ideas and evidence
Are reached by man but through his avenues of sense,
Which tell of natural bodies (subject to fixed laws)
Corporate institutes dependent on applause,
Societies and rules. Since natural man makes war
And reaps much misery, must mishaps oft deplore,
He, for the greater good, demands the people's trust,
Says that the useful, ever, is the right and just.
Too, primal instincts, as this analyst has found,
Would anarchy oppose upon a double ground;—
First, they would life preserve, next strengthen
happiness,
As doubtless Hobbes' sure glance around him could
impress;
But all are thus affect, and compound-man, the
State,
Asks, for the weal of most, its edicts should have weight.
Since each must bow to laws designed for general
good,
He can demand due rights, as beyond question
should
Always the Commonwealth. As for the Church, 'tis
mere
A useful ordinance. Truly it doth appear,

The will is not corrupt! but gleams the stronger one
Of motives in the mind when conflict has begun.
Nor can by any chance the human will be free;
For who has ever willed what next his will shall be?
Religion is but fear, when we of gods are proud;
While superstition fears what we have not allowed.
Throughout, our self-love rules! yet somewhat fancy sways,
Wherefore a frequent pity softens human ways.
Scarce for the fruit of others' minds Hobbes felt a want,
Had he as freely read, he were as ignorant!
Rather he loved to think, untrammelled and uncurbed;
By force original, old tenets sore disturbed.
Arose Spinoza, Jew of courage infinite,
Despised because he saw no sign in Hebrew Writ
Of immortality: treated with harshest scorn;
Who would provide a proof of helpful logic born
That God dwells everywhere. Alas! grew execrate
This searcher for the truth, whom few can emulate!
For him, vast substance strange behind perfection lies,
Matter and mind are attributes a Deity supplies.
Strove once again an Englishman, and progress won
Whose sober influence and force can ne'er be done.
Seeking whence knowledge has attained its lofty pitch,
Locke, by an honest plan, gathered a harvest rich;
Investigating mind, asked how ideas are gained;
Observing childhood's years, sound testimony obtained.
Searching, he would not probe the soul of moralists,
But that 'mongst savages, barbarians, exists,

Whose knowledge comes from fingers, tongue and eyes
and ears;
While soon reflection tells if the result coheres.
Arrives association, much together links;
So, more and more profound, each growing being
thinks
That early learns of space, through touch, scent, hear-
ing, sight;
Of substance, as on things his pressures oft alight.
Ever experience comes, and newly stored within,
Permits the helpless child advantages to win;
Never an element of thought but has its cause,
Mind's marvels flexible proceed from strictest laws.
As if to show the great can scarcely think alike,
Into paths opposite would energetic strike;
Said cultured Berkeley next, only ideas exist,
Else, how are frenzies bred; or why should dreams
persist
That lack cause visible? Of matter looms no
proof!
'Tis a vain inference wherefrom to hold aloof!
Further, he held, ideas show the All-wise's will;
Could not agree the brain shall toil, though seeming
still,
And restlessly reflect, fresh images e'er make
Out of materials vast collected while awake;
Grows complex through nerve-change, inheritance,
hid ways,
Rises sufficient for the mind's supreme displays.
Who turn their genius to philosophy's pursuit
Can into mazes glide, though scholars most acute;
So must sagacious Hume come strange conclusions near
And e'en a wilder course than any other steer;

Well had pronounced, 'tis likelier witnesses should err
Than that, at any time, miracles can occur!
Matter is but impressions in the mind, he taught,
Which faint exist; indeed, all substance is as naught!
Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume:
man passed
Gradually unto truth, then nullity at last!
As 'twere a murrain thus had fallen on the sage
Who deal in subtle thought, quests philosophic wage;
But, as if strangely abstract notions scarce should live,
Forth shone continuous a knowledge positive
That hates assumptions false, is indisposed to dream,
Moves in the straightest paths our future to redeem.

L

What nobler shines than science man to dignify?
Which now has taught the bold high above Earth
to fly!
Began majestical to hint at natural law
Before shrewd Francis Bacon newer pathways saw.
Invention e'en already wrought a mighty change
When it the magnet proved of potent habit strange,
A magic friend and true, that oscillating shows
A steadfast willingness such method to disclose
As shall help argosies with ease to cross the main,
Whether from Hindustan or coasts of further Spain.
Columbus ships had seen 'neath the horizon sink;
Courageous westward sailed whither, as he must
think,
Asia lay glorious; and next, da Gama passed
Beyond South Afric's Cape, while mightier still, at last,
Toil-worn Magellan's men, for years upon the deep,
Girdling the world entire, could into Lisbon creep!

Thus Eastern treasure rich and early wisdom rare
Were wafted hither to our keener Western air;
The while America's huge continent oft proved
A spot whereunto man his hopes and fortune moved.
Too, came a surer means of raising humankind,
Sprang into life a plan for strengthening the mind,
For Gutenberg of Mainz, could of a sudden seek
With wooden type men's thoughts forth to the world to speak;
So likewise Caxton would for England honour win,
Whose printers paper saw replace the vellum skin.
No longer monkish scribes embellish and caress,
In lieu, deft prentices swift feed an oaken press;
No more a single tome must cost a ransom small,
Books come, ere many years, within the reach of all.
Now Italy, which science culled from Moorish Spain,
Had bred societies sinking to earth swift slain
Before a narrow priesthood's fear-producing blast;
Still, later, brought forth sons in a fine matrix cast,
Of whom than great da Vinci none more famous grew.
Such, the fixed laws of force mechanic showing true,
And, as an engineer, guessing our Earth rotates,
Pondered on gravitation, much thereto relates.
Though planets bright were held in ancient days to run
Circling around the gorgeous gloom-dispelling Sun;
Egypt's sage, Ptolemy must re-dispose the stars,
Arrest Earth's motion, whirl the Sun and Saturn, Mars;
A scheme which pleased the Church, for it right well agreed
With both the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers' creed,

Disturbed not flattering judgments nor religious zest,
Set man upon a throne of grandeur manifest.
And zealous some continued, when Dark Ages passed,
To search for Cosmic truths, wherefore it happed at last,
Exclaims Copernicus, despising prison or worse,
Small Earth is scarce the centre of the Universe!
So dogma contradicts; since theologic sense
Considers human beings of mighty consequence,
Doubts a designer of the Cosmos would descend
Earthward, except to further a stupendous end.
Though natural death preserves this Prussian from sad woes,
Less happily escape successors from their foes!
Thus Galileo, showing bodies hurled through space
Fly straight, save outer forces change their course and pace,
Being crushed by dungeon life (for stern Rome disapproves)
Allows the Earth is still! then mutters, yet it moves!
As Kepler shows the planets' distance from the sun
Governs the years in which their circuit full is done;
So Isaac Newton answers a yet higher call,
Can flawless demonstrate how an attracting ball
Upon a lesser acts. Still, finds he that the Moon
Circling about our Earth, seemingly oversoon
Returns upon her round. Joyous must he have leapt
(Who hoped that every kind of motion he had swept
Into a single law) when to his eager eyes
Spring other facts of Earth's and Moon's respective size,

Support his earlier thought. Doubtless his glow is such,
He scarcely can draw breath or sustenance well touch
Until appears before him, past all cavil shown,
The strangest truth a race inquisitive has known;—
Obscurest gravity, making an apple fall,
Controls the course alike of both the great and small;
Rules Sun and Moon and stars, affects the feather light
Descending in thin air; is limitless of might.
Ah, science ever covets, something fresh would glean,
Ay, will tradition's rules valorous contravene,
Now must experiment, now search and calculate,
In one way or another, soften human fate!
Drawn by which tendency to that is oft sublime,
Aids Sovereign Charles a sage society to climb
The ladder of renown; which body soon succeeds,
With frequent strenuous action splendid knowledge speeds;
Must a new calendar to mankind introduce,
Fears nor a threatening crowd nor bigots' wild abuse.
It unto Newton's works publicity can give,
Measuring heat and time, make methods sensitive;
Harvey encourage, a famed doctor who clear proves
The blood, within our veins, swift coursing ever moves.
Already man his gaze directed high and far,
Through crystal lenses, glanced at many a gorgeous star;
Discovered, near at hand, that interest or enthral,
The dazzling wonders of the infinitely small;
Ere long delighted in the study at his ease
Of tissues intimate, to know himself could please:

Aiming to penetrate the mysteries of life,
Learnt something of the atoms' endless hidden strife.
And he becomes courageous, hears the thunder's roar
With scarce a mark of dread; fears Heaven's ire no more;
Or (when a flaming portent travels through the sky)
Calm watches signs foretold that, centuries gone by,
Had led the Holy Father widely to ordain
Strict prayers and tolling bells, pity of God to gain.

LI

Next, when the ruler passed who science would assist,
One came much sorrowing Rome's might had been dismissed;
And, full of crafty ways the people sore annoyed,
Absolute sway required; as chancellor employed
A Jeffreys truculent who gruesomely could urge
The hangman on fair shoulders well to lay the scourge;
A judge must travel westward, earn the vilest name,
More than the epoch's harshness, e'en his own, proclaim.
Moreover London suffers, who would James oppose
Or play the puritan, in turn feels royal blows;
Ay, a good dame is burned that lent a rebel aid;
Still, of the papist despot, men are not afraid;
So, when the Monarch claims laws fixed to abrogate,
E'en Rome's return to power help ruthless and irate,
True patriots arise, dare offer England's crown
To a Prince protestant of genius and renown.

Now from high Dover cliffs, as well, a western shore,
Folk see good William's ships extend for miles a score;
Ay, Englishmen, rejoicing manhood to exalt,
Drive out the would-be tyrant, soon without assault
Or any violence, resume their liberty,
Prosper as ne'er before, enjoy a senate free.

Not but a fickle fate might otherwise have turned
Had dexterous Churchill wavered, William's efforts spurned;
But shrewdness he evinced, that with a winning port,
In battle as in peace, was formed success to court;
Who, if as said, enriched at times in ways unmeet,
Shone gloriously at Blenheim, never met defeat.

Forthwith, 'neath rulers seldom willing to o'erride
Faith or opinion strong, the land could gaze with pride
On blest internal peace; while near-adjacent shores
Oft trembled at the tramp of alien warriors.

Swiftly diminished faction and a people rose
Who valued every right and solid progress chose;
Sagaciously perceiving avenues of wealth,
E'en welcomed Huguenots that left their homes by stealth.

Then came a lust for riches, hazardous, unearned;
As 'twere a mind disorder, through the nation, burned,
Till sorry fools must in the wildest bubble share,
Reach, after struggles frenzied, an extreme despair.

Nor could monitions sway, such hour, accentuate,
Since pastors, having lapsed from high respect's estate,
(Teaching the right divine of a King late expelled)
Found in return some honour was from them withheld.

Sprang up philosophers who daringly opined,
Error in thought religious, well may lie entwined;

And deists doubt permitted o'er their minds to steal
If God e'er hither came his mercy to reveal:
Lured by the pleasing traits of the new common-sense,
Asked would Omnipotence with majesty dispense,
Visiting little Earth allow the reign of woe
Such as 'tis destiny of man to undergo.
Is God a vague ideal, sure linking in one name
More than the utmost good which angels could proclaim?
Embodiment of widest, universal need
For a support and help, apart from any creed,
As children a protector seek till risk is o'er
And the unfortunate for final joys implore?
Is He the mystic concept of each hungering mind,
Drawn to a vision rapt, aware itself is blind;
A spirit all unknown, by some is placed afar,
By others here as well as regions nebular?
Or but the complement of imperfection vast,
A notion laudable by dimness overcast;
An ineffectual dream of a world infinite,
Or sum of hidden laws beyond a puny wit;
An undefined and huge unmeasured aggregate
Of strange conditions ruling every creature's fate;
In might an Infinite that, epochs past, resolved
On simplest life, then paused, and saw man's race evolved;
A Cosmic energy producing greater good
As man and Nature's self seem better understood?

LII

Still, pious moods about a natural base revolve,
And in no passing tempest sudden can dissolve,
As knows ambitious Swift who dips his pen in gall,
To warring Churches' foibles will attention call;

Limns imperturbably a humorous conceit,
Damning with trenchant wit those he deems counterfeit.
Then, as the ministry his style and method like,
They wield this mordant force their enemies to strike;
Since party governance relies on controverse,
Pourtrayal of a foe as than the devil worse,
Suppresses and distorts and renders blow for blow,
Forever strains and sweats an evil to o'erthrow.
Hence Swift is used the Whigs o'er-warlike to eject
But wins no bishopric lucrative and select;
Rages a dean in Dublin, with his thunder shakes
Senates and evil-doers; women's soft hearts breaks,
Yet strict is in observance, last, a-suffering stays
Leaving a name must awe, rouse sympathy, amaze.

LIII

Such hour, great minds a true society would lead
When seldom duchesses give education heed:
Dryden the virile reigns, in judgment sits, at Wills';
Calm, polished Addison a throne at Button's fills.
And coffee-houses vie and taverns mark the town,
Aim in a special way to win a wide renown,
Thus, here, staid merchants barter better than on 'Change,
And, there, the spark loud boasts a fresh adventure strange
With a masked beauty in the Mall or Gardens, Park,
Where, periwigged, he toyed with cane and snuff till dark.
Then poets wished to check the spirit rapturous,
E'en welcomed argument or fancy serious,
So that their art emerged, 'neath logic's goad, less free
(As Daphne at Apollo's touch became a tree)

Preferred the beauties of a formal garden, new,
To a wild fragrant blossom, manifold of hue.
Yet the surpassing skill of Pope can moods obey,
Now mingle wit and force and now with fancy play!
Who, in a reasoning age, rejoiced to yield men bliss
By sense, dexterity, sound, and antithesis;
Though dealing enemies, detractors, measure hard,
Revealed a phase of life, the nature of a bard
Diminutive and weak his venom must express,
Even an Atticus pursue with bitterness.
But devotees of rhyme soon know competitors;
Booksellers, libraries wide open throw their doors,
Encourage essayists, and such as weave a tale
Lending itself to all the thoughts in mind prevail.
Unfettered, scattering wisdom, as it were by chance,
Choice Steele and Addison link humour, elegance;
While he that long ago, feeling his love wound's hurt,
With far Arcadia's ways, a sister would divert,
Is followed by a scribe tells on a desert isle
Each day a castaway can solitude beguile.
So one 'mongst books had dwelt, in letters sentiment
To woes of heroines, and pleasing glamour, lent;
And one unshrinking drew a youthful hero coarse,
Sparing not rich relief, showed manifold resource.
Defoe and Richardson and Fielding! surely much
To you is owed could life inimitably touch!
How shone a potency within the new romance
A writer's and his reader's pleasure to enhance!

LIV

Persists prosperity, while well the State directs
He that the senate's vote, even with gold affects!

For sturdy Walpole craves to view the land at peace,
That its resources may miraculous increase,
While good apprentices add to their masters' store,
And make the shuttle speed e'er faster than before.
Still, rich and poor affect each foolish whim to please,
Both high and low discover soulless tendencies,
Wherefore occasion comes for mighty Hogarth's brush
Scathingly to correct, never disposed to hush,
Reveal with many traits a bias insular
Toward conflict and adventure, even horrid war.
'Midst enemies to rankle much as might a thorn,
Now can proud Chatham rise up England to adorn;
Springing, 'spite obstacles, to loftiest power at last,
Stirred by the glories of great empires of the past;
Who ever caused opponents tremulous to quake,
Supporters magnetised with passion as he spake;
So, as a victor reached all was his heart's desire,
Choosing sound instruments, the nation could inspire,
Rescue his countrymen in difficulties thrown,
Successful urge to gain dominions of their own.
From Canada would march to Mexico's broad sea
Brave colonists of France; while Britain's sons as free
Seek westward to push on across the prairie grass,
Scorning the Redskin's knife, Ohio's stream must pass.
The Englishmen inquire, shall Fort Duquesne exist
To daunt them who intend to go where'er they list?
Whence suddenly Montcalm at dawn receives the news,
His foes have scaled the heights which foothold should refuse,
Perceives his troops recoil before a steady aim
That wrecks his hopes, confers on Wolfe immortal fame!

Ere long, the valiant Clive, cadet and writer bold,
Victorious in the field, half Hindustan can hold;
Makes clear the power of Britons weaker folk to aid
Whom tyranny and clime have rendered mild, afraid.
So warlike Frederick's friends and insular allies,
O'ercoming East and West, awake the world's surprise!

LV

Still breathed the mass of men uneducate and rude
That, e'en in cities great, the country's strength renewed,
Unlikely to be raised by Congreve's brilliant wit
Or Otway's glowing warmth, Farquhar's truth apposite,
When dramatists were willing coarsely to pursue
Love's sweetness, so, destroy its more enchanting hue;
Whence pastors, ill at ease, put forth their influence
But scarcely could evoke a virtuous reverence.
Then Wesley strove to stir the human heart amain,
Who must discern poor sinners swiftly born again;
A scholar rare, that unto a great concourse, dumb
Till they his signal heard, would a lone horseman come,
All to true godliness with exhortation speed,
Imploring each should give a future wrath due heed.

LVI

Yet as blithe cavaliers for gaiety would long,
Whereas the Puritans held every pleasure wrong,
Could now the people live, despite each pious prayer,
Oft-time a prey to failings which the weak ensnare.
Whence moralists were called for; one of whom, well known,
With countless Englishmen a favourite has grown,
Enjoying since his epoch ceaseless fame till ours,
Stands forth a sage and poet, talker of vast powers.

Cradled amidst the treasures of a bookman sire,
Johnson, as child, of authors does not ready tire;
But, after early years of school and lettered ease,
Alas! must suffer, think how famine to appease!
Unhonoured while at college, e'en with vision dim
And nervous ways foretelling but an outlook grim,
Moody, despondent and disposed to feelings fierce,
He doggedly contends, the heart of things would pierce.
Briefly a pedagogue, alarming those he taught,
He could aspire to gleam in London's heaven up-caught;
Says farewell to his wife, a ripe and valued prize,
And stoutly pushes forth, with valour in his eyes,
To learn how need can rack a giant frame uncouth,
Since talents such as his but slow awaken ruth.
Ere long, man's cruelty burdens a bitter plaint,
Drives him with caustic strength to cry, without restraint,
How wide is tolerance of vice and every ill,
Save only poverty close yoked with worthy skill!
Then, from a garret mean, his phrases fine adorn
A senate's eloquence unto the nation borne;
Till he advances full upon a project rare,
Thinks to define and publish each word's meaning fair;
A task stupendous that allows digressions oft
While spurring not his soul lightly to soar aloft.
Whence as a satirist, drawn ever to the worst,
He sings of wishes vain and every creature curst;
Must jeer at Sweden's hero, avid Xerxes mock,
Cry Wolsey's fall doth pity, ay, and scorn unlock;
Only disaster sees he, crime, disease and foes,
Employs his cynic numbers on unceasing woes!

Moved Samuel on to essays forcible and deep,
Uttered a strong desire mankind shall virtuous keep;
Propounding benefits sonorously and grave,
Feared not to show a wish each human soul to save.
Who in the market-place a penitent dared stand
(There, once had disobeyed an honoured sire's command)
Then keenly, mostly just, of previous poets wrote
And by discursiveness the duller methods smote.
Of stoic cast, e'er Johnson would submit to toil,
Whose destiny appeared from favours to recoil
Till, last, a grateful country multiplied his store,
Whereon, with genial traits and softness brimming o'er,
Into his home he called the weak and derelict,
Opened his arms to some by Nature were afflict.
E'er harsh to adversaries who come within his ground,
The famous oracle and disputant is found
Oft in a tavern, late, whither his way he wends,
To speak in measured tones, nor swiftly make amends;
Or by his couch, receives early such circle small
As love to hear his wisdom and sharp wit recall,
Lavishes intellect inferior minds to teach
And hungers for a topic shall be past his reach.
A melancholy held him in the dread of death
And bias, prejudice seemed almost as the breath
Of one that, liking force, discussion ne'er eschewed,
Long a dictator reigned or gladiator shrewd,
Shunned all defeat and shone unsparing of retort,
Was pious, leant to truth, evinced a manly port;
With fine sincerity and sturdiness for right,
Diffuses, in our day, a clear and glowing light.

As he that sport approves, scarcely in haste condemns
A victor making use of feints or stratagems,
Friends watched the moralist dismay with vigorous skill,
Perplex through dialectic, overbearing will.
Amongst them Goldsmith sat, of simple kindly ways,
Designed for happiness and pleasant Nature's praise;
Too, Reynolds versatile, whose dignity inspires,
And Garrick, actor famed, rousing ambition's fires;
With Gibbon, annalist impressive and renowned,
Majestically striding over Roman ground.

LVII

And scarce absented him from such a social feast
As quickness of the mind and subtlety increased,
One zealous in affairs, who aided England's course
Through many a troubled year, glittered an active force,
E'en, when his country's future threatened seemed by fate,
Left valiant Fox, became strong Pitt's associate.
And Burke, that previous dealt with beauty, the sublime,
Must steady advocate, despite a stubborn time,
A large morality, and pregnant powers thus spent,
Would see abuses vile receive discouragement.
As to religious scruples, deemed he them no cause
Why, anywhere, a man should know unequal laws;
While for a luckless wretch, prisoned because of debt,
Due pity he would breed and sympathy beget.
Asking, if judges grim, although the nation's flower,
Did well, so much and oft, to take from juries power;

Wrathfully Burke complained were hurried at the tree
Numberless men and women to eternity,
And that with ill renown Christians their souls could brand
Who must the base resource of trade in slaves command.
Yet troubles changed his thought, and when a race oppressed,
Displaying violence, might for themselves would wrest,
One for the colonists spake with impassioned voice,
Urging Americans in freedom should rejoice;
Sudden inclined to vengeance, nigh bereft of calm,
Maintained but enmity to France could bring her balm!

LVIII

England ere long has fallen into peril dire,
For warlike neighbours soon to glories fresh aspire,
The while their Emperor proud, stirred by enduring hate,
As victor would ambitious Cæsar emulate,
Assembles a vast throng on a convenient coast,
Inclines his prowess and her impotence to boast.
But anxious that one lives who threatens, will not spare,
Nay, strains his energies our country to ensnare;
Up leaps a fiery soul set in a body frail,
Longs to protect the land disasters sure assail:
Loving her welfare so, none ever loved it more,
Nelson indomitable, impetuous in war,
That injuries despite, still the horizon scans;
Handles his sword or pen, with fertile genius plans.
Unto West Indian isles, by ways of craft supreme,
Yet is this sea-lord drawn from fell invasion's scheme,

Must mightily pursue (as doth a noble hound
That recks not whither, but will run his prey to ground)
And only overtakes, anigh the shores of Spain,
Those would assist Napoleon Britons to constrain.
Now, by Trafalgar's cape, Nelson his foemen sights,
Whose distant ships deployed a sun resplendent lights,
As, in a double line, they shotted batteries keep
Pointed at columns twain that, o'er the smoothest deep,
Approach majestical. Meaning to strike the rear,
Destroy the centre, ere the van can backward steer,
To leeward Collingwood, to windward Nelson leads;
And 'tis the *Royal Sovereign* in the race succeeds,
After long helplessness and patient suffering dire,
Ranging the *Santa Anna* with revengeful fire,
Risks combat solitary with every foe at hand,
But keeps her colours high, persisting can withstand,
Till loom the *Mars* and *Ajax* slowly near with friends,
To her, as rescuers, make doughtily amends.
Tardily, breezes soft are wafting on her way
The *Victory*, whose peak a message must display,
Unto beholders staunchest, thrilling words directs,
"England of every man, his duty now expects!"
A far-off flash, a roar! yet well the hero knows
He must inactive stay, head straightway for his foes;
Writhes that his ship is hurt and gallant fellows fall,
But seems unruffled; then, conveys the proper call.
Leading impassively, this captain of the dumb
Bids all that follow wheel, as to the line they come,
Make sure, with strenuous wish, to choose a foeman each,
Swift with bright tongues of flame a deadly purpose teach.

Sharp on the *Bucentaure* at last the *Victory* turns,
Exhibits horrid skill, for rage within her burns,
Then, veering once again, an adversary claims,
Broadsides the fiercest at the brave *Redoubtable* aims,
Till steadfast colleagues 'midst the din and smoke arrive,
Fresh British giants huge with French and Spanish strive
Whose mightiest soon totters to the right, the left,
A cumbrous hulk becomes, of masts and sails bereft.
Continuous extends the battle's wild array,
From all has vanished fear ; courage alone can sway ;
Still the heroic scene, sudden titanic war
Lack not in courtesy as, one by one, a score
Of valiant chiefs most sadly in submission bend,
Triumphs without a pause to Britain's grandeur lend.
Bestarred, despising peril, of such without reck,
With a companion, calmly, Nelson treads the deck ;
Capable of the thought, the hour has come to die,
Gives earnest praise to God for a just victory ;
Repines not that a ball o'er true can strike him down ;
Hopes he has done his duty ; passing gains his crown !

So, when the land has need of other genius true,
'Tis found that Wellington can high success ensue,
Has shone through Hindustan, won lustre fresh in Spain,
Next dazzles with his triumph on a Belgian plain.

LIX

But, with a pause to battle, glows a milder force,
Bringing advantage certain on a native course,
Where sympathy advances for man's wretchedness,
Zeal would bestir itself, and remedies wide press

On one has shown of late a greater right to live,
Vanquishing obstacles by ways inquisitive;
Valued inventiveness, deep pried, to knowledge turned,
And gradually more of mighty Nature learned.
Now, Science was sore hoping to her voice would list
Observers accurate, the chemist, physicist,
Who found the air to be no single element,
Affinities to mass a unity have lent;
While matter ne'er is lost, as the fine balance showed,
Weighing a particle as well as a full load.
And after Cavendish, the lonely, won renown
And Priestley toiled, who scarce escaped a martyr's crown,
It was vouchsafed Lavoisier dexterous should find,
Water's constituents are twain, unlike of kind.
'Tis said that ancient Hero, upon Egypt's shore,
With help of heated water, motion could rule o'er;
Yet victories decisive sometimes pass forgot,
Forbear to point man's way, alleviate his lot;
So tedious centuries saw weapons never still,
While science slept, suppressed her proud ambitious will.
A-sudden, Della Porta, busy Papin scheme,
Measure the attributes of the strange creature steam,
Muse on its readiness to soar, win liberty,
Cooling in turn, diminish, and lose energy.
And Watt employs such traits the torpor to o'ercome
Which is a property of earthly matter dumb;
Perceives a docile slave e'er steadfastly at hand,
Desirous to give service, craving man's command.

E'en countless industries the new assistance taste ;
Ships are by Fulton sped ; loads, swift as steeds, would haste
At will of Stephenson. Forthwith mankind receive
A brisker impetus than sanguine ones believe
Well can be possible ; folk separately obtain
The stimulus which all from intercourse should gain.
And capital alert economises toil,
Huge smoke-stacks tower aloft, mines deeper pierce the soil,
The ancient handicrafts assume a form disguised,
Ay, commerce forward leaps within a world surprised ;
While patiently machines, 'midst a resounding whirr,
For their strange faithfulness to admiration stir,
Whose mighty effort slow, or swift recurrent stroke,
From such as benefit, should gratitude evoke.
Querulous if you suffer any harsh neglect,
Demanding loudly then additional respect,
Cylinders, cranks and pinions, pistons, cogs and wheels !
'Twere hard to tell the love which man for you now feels,
Who would deserve your best, friendly and intimate
Dares not evince before you carelessness or hate !

LX

Yet has solicitude at times but little gleamed,
Nor effort shone that comrades should arise redeemed
From their worst wretchedness. Still of their best have given
Oft kindly generous hearts, surpassingly then striven
That men from misery might surely grow more free,
And prosper 'neath the sway of active sympathy.
Which gentle tendency shall aim to guide and cheer
In special things, or mould a general career,

And, if the stress of life sufficient call them out,
Deeds bravely militant not seldom brings about:
Can, or a triumph seize with shrewdly clamorous skill,
Or silent, calm, persistent, a high end fulfil.
When breathed a finer soul than Howard, whom 'twas given,
To be the instrument by which strong chains were riven?
Of but a fragile frame, a weakling till the time
A view of others' woes aroused his force sublime;
By deepest love inspired and burning sense of wrong,
'Gainst cruelty he rose. It did, such hour, belong
To many gaolers coarse, unpaid in this our land,
To drag oppressive fees, with no impartial hand,
From wretches in their grasp; who, false accused and freed,
To duress went again, if monetary need
Distracted them; in filthy dens and fetid air,
To herd with men and women foully and despair;
Recking of others not, left hopelessly to lie
Till grisly typhus came; then, muttering low, to die.
Yet the reformer touched the minds of some in power,
Whence captives miserable had lessened cause to cower.
Whereon he rested not, showed ceaseless energy;
With spirit still athirst, encouraged destiny
Almost to strike him down; awhile incarcerate
Within a narrow cell, could sadly guess the fate
Of such as even sought a speedy, precious death
Rather than linger gasping till a final breath.

Which details murderous were grimly, well laid bare
By the philanthropist, who widely heard men swear
They would have better things. Wherefore in distant lands,
This visitor of prisons ever found commands
Highly to honour him. So 'twas his glorious life
Found a harmonious close; for, asked when plague was rife
To heed a woman's woes, then all for her he gave,
Begged but a few plain words upon his foreign grave.

LXI

Strange to us seems an age which, holding souls as dross,
O'er frequent, harshest deeds without a pang could gloss,
As those of Bristol merchants anxious to win wealth,
Who seizing helpless negroes, scorned the use of stealth,
Sent them with rigour where the cane or cotton lay,
Luckless to live and prove for overseers a prey.
To own a fellow-man now seems a notion vile:
But long in face of woe, complacently to smile,
Bartering human flesh, a captive's body tire,
On it inflict the promptings of capricious ire,
Say 'tis impossible a thrall can have a soul,
That he should ask for rights is but a matter droll,
Appeared to honest minds e'en natural and correct,
An ancient virtuous custom calling for respect.
Then, brave ones banded them opinion to improve,
While the good Quakers fast toward better things would move;

Vehement Clarkson could but rouse to tenderness,
Wilberforce swayed the senate by his rapt address;
So shrinking slaves being borne no more across the sea,
Ere long, on British soil, none lingered but the free.
Still, in the land itself, where apathy had reigned,
Long years elapsed before true betterment was gained!
Where, callous to their fate, wont hastened to forsake
Culprits of little guilt that hideous rules might break;
As if a young wife filched, whose mate for war was pressed,
Went she to death, despite the suckling at her breast.
Nor until Romilly had checked man's callous pride,
Did dread severity extend a net less wide
Where, lacking pity, folk had made for rogues a law
Leaving them hardened, reckless and devoid of awe.
Often would jovial souls, as at near Tyburn, meet
The brutal sent where never they could faults repeat;
Or scan a forger's features, for a proper fee,
Ere he became the hero of dire pageantry;
Or, of the quality, might view a woman, stript
And till the justice knocked, within the Bridewell, whipt.
Untaught remained the throng; given to rudest sport
And drear convivial customs, a brief joy must court;
Possessed by prejudice, were capable of ire,
Too willing to destroy, slay, pillage, search with fire.
Facile, from so much woe, great industries could draw,
Ruthlessly, needed labour, sate a ravening maw;
Find families forlorn to be by toiling scarred,
Because the State, neglecting over such to guard,

Left them to strain and faint, Earth's surface e'en
beneath,
Far from the wholesome joys of meadow, wood and
heath;
Or, in drear factories work through longest hours of
night,
Then snatch a needed sleep at cost of Heaven's
light.
Which wrongs, as of small children sent not forth
to play,
And little climbing boys sped on their horrid way,
The tender consciences of many deep affect.
To Shaftesbury, seem a reason zealots should protect.
Slaves to necessity and economic laws,
Mankind must labour, struggle, suffer without pause!
Although the fearful sign of insurrection's threat
Warns of conditions oft-time urgent to be met.
Should England's Commons' House be filled in
fashion base
And cities stay unfranchised, yield to hamlets place?
Or remedies be used, immediate and abrupt
For riddance of old methods, servile and corrupt?
Tremble the ruling powers, see peril in reform,
But dread the people's might, and firmly brave the
storm,
Making grim sufferers still more exasperate,
Readier to meet death than an unworthy fate,
Who fall to rioting, light anarchy's fell fires,
Thus indicate their need and passionate desires.
Still, Grey of lofty soul and earnest Russell lead,
To please the populace with a proud senate plead,
Demonstrate 'tis no hour for hesitance, delay;
Urge but a boldness wise can threatened troubles stay.

Then noble autocrats, scarce inly moved by love,
Forsake a privilege and rise the past above;
Hinder not those would deal with ills in England strewn,
The legislative creed to modern thought attune.
Now reform's spirit swayed and Peel brave fortune woo'd,
Welcoming foreign wheat, cheapened the people's food;
While, at the last, the kindly, liking not to keep
The common folk in fetters, harmless since asleep;
For them procured the boon that not untaught they live
E'en as the Church had longed a benefit to give.
Holding it is incumbent on an honest State
To help youth ignorant, men wish compassionate,
Each shall be furnished with advantages of mind
To conquer obstacles and new resources find.

LXII

Daring the past to alter, e'en the fixed and old,
Thus statesmen cry them moved, as by the essence bold
Of science that hates error, e'er affords a proof
She is a mistress choice, in whose supreme behoof
Oft swains are willing lures and pleasures to dismiss,
If they, but reverently, her mantle's hem may kiss.
Singers and preachers, prophets, evils shall assuage
And serve a special purpose on a chosen stage;
So may the student sound of natural law precise
Confer advantages, yet not to paradise
Forthwith conduct mankind, while with joys exquisite
He is ere long endowed that for such toil is fit.
Still, sturdy minds incline often to something more
Than merely knowledge won, aspire to use their lore;

Ready for arduous tasks, the Universe would scan,
Seldom forget the future benefit of man ;
Dissatisfied hid riches merely to unearth,
They must display a power shall prove the treasures' worth ;
Feeling an active bond of sympathy innate,
Forthwith can show their might, new good for men create.
Soon as the later learning man toward freedom took,
Careless of obloquy, he dared courageous look
Into his body strange ; furthered, ere long, an art
Which among ancient Greeks had a small counterpart,
Since he gave evidence of dexterous healing skill,
Let never stay a doubt of human force and will.

LXIII

Of Scotia's sons august who reverence invite,
John Hunter, sage chirurgeon, nobly proved his right
To honour, gratitude. From trammels e'er averse,
Even in youth he pines, despite an ill-lined purse,
To roam in Nature's paths ; would secrets penetrate,
Deep principles convey, and thoughts communicate.
How lowly loomed his art till Hunter raised it high,
Prompted to effort by a fine humanity !
Before him, none had guessed how Nature wounds repairs
Or speeds nutritious lymph ; which topics and like cares
Secured him laurels proud, as too, did many a task
He early undertook, inspired for truth to ask.
Close labour weakens him, and he must health recruit,
Serving in Portugal, finds toil himself to suit :

Treating men's battle-wounds in ways considerate,
Rejects all methods harsh, is swift to innovate.
Then, from the war returned, as he a-sudden stands,
He falls, a tendon ruptures, wisdom new commands;
Makes on a humble beast forthwith experiment,
And learns how Nature cures by method diligent.
Collecting animals, he oft wins fancies sound,
Watching inferior traits, can gain ideas profound;
Ever disposed to doubt, thus seeks the best advice;
Asks in the greatest realms for proofs that shall suffice.
And once he severs from the antler of a deer
The stream of nourishment, discerns, who close can peer,
The cold horn slowly lengthen, next grow even warm;
For channels small of blood in time have learned to form!
Took he a wondrous step, a patient's artery tied
Who, cursed with aneurism, would surely soon have died!
'Twas zeal magnificent! But why praise Hunter more?
Whose skill could grateful thousands unto health restore,
And genius lead him e'er to pass laborious days,
Moving a little onward in the Cosmic maze,
Endeavouring to fathom mysteries of life,
Anxious to heal vast ills with which our lot is rife!

LXIV

And, when a mighty Frenchman had revealed the cause
Why wounds rebel against neglect of wholesome laws;

Next, one of gracious glance and shrewdly searching mind,
Ever disposed a cure for fleshly woes to find,
A surgeon ways imperfect scarcely well endured,
Blood-vessels with fresh means from hæmorrhage secured!
Rose Joseph Lister thus high honour to deserve,
From a laborious task never inclined to swerve,
Strove valiantly, descried at last, a perfect way
Over death-dealing germs to exercise his sway:
Subdued the horrid foes that, lurking near, as pests
Direfully carry out harsh destiny's behests!
Using lore chemical, he made discoveries sure,
And banishing all foulness, with each surface pure,
Obtained a perfect scope for operators' skill
Who now in 'minished fear dare satisfy their will.
See, groaning not, the wounded know contented hours,
Sighing less often, show recuperative powers,
Fortunate that they live when man's advancing force
Summons to his assistance every late resource!

LXV

How truly knowledge has become nigh infinite,
Whose devotees directing, here or there, their wit,
And duly touched by ardour, practise methods shrewd;
Breathe undismayed despite first efforts seem but crude,
Are by the thought sustained, through help of each may shine
A ray before unfelt, even a beam divine!
Ah, joy supreme is it to toil without restraint
The world with Cosmic laws the better to acquaint;
With scarce a thought of gold, or hunger for applause,
A little, if not far, approach the hidden cause

Of Nature and her powers. 'Tis a delight ideal
Of such a sort as ever must to more appeal.
One in experiment discerned a mighty charm
And found in curious science nothing to alarm,
Though turning Heavenward at times a mystic's glance,
Was able previous aims of knowledge to enhance.
For strenuous Faraday electric powers beguiled
That, ere his hour, remained to man unreconciled!
Franklin afar had proved exists a subtle force
Awaking 'mongst the clouds the lightning's sudden course;
Then Volta 'twixt close metals currents could detect,
Which, Oersted showed, will magnets right or left deflect;
Whereon, wise Faraday, at work within the camp
Of him to miners gave, vast boon, the safety-lamp;
Becoming rapt of gaze, devised a wondrous plan
Whereby a whirling wire, enchanted, freely ran
Around a magnet still. Lo! magic could from heaven drop!
The magnet, too, rotated even as a top,
'Neath influences weird of currents near at hand;
How reason, nobly spurred, can puissance strange command!
Advantage generous, electric force supreme!
Thou should'st, indeed, assist projects whereof men dream!
Since, when on Faraday's results some briefly muse,
Through their activity a victory ensues.
They set before huge magnets, bobbined wire to twirl,
And see the tortured current sparks of lightning hurl!

They currents send through magnets fixed ; and view
begin
Near magnets, placed in wired coils, around to spin !
Newly could motion, light, two prizes of the Earth,
Then, nigh immediately, prove the discoverer's worth
Whose thought intense, with hope to learn the truth
of things,
Darkness o'ercomes afresh, the reign of swiftness
brings ;
Ay, whose determination Nature to lay bare
Yields to ambitious ones the conquest of the air !
'Twere hard to gauge the greatness of mankind's
advance
Since Faraday on magnets cast a fervid glance,
Holding, in what is dark, slow judgments should be
formed,
All knowledge surely reached, doubt's obstacle ne'er
stormed.
Thus he investigates, always in spirit meek,
Stirred by his toil, enthralled, would matter's mysteries
seek ;
Scarce caring for reward, desiring fame nor wealth,
Of lofty character and doing good by stealth,
Blest with a simple faith, maintains a soul serene,
Doubts not a Lord of all, above, has ever been.

LXVI

So knowledge abstract, deep, bringing stupendous
gains,
Shows puissance manifold, with greater splendour
reigns,
Strange benefits will grant, freely to be avowed ;
As many now foresee, predict in accents loud,

Deem, since conditions human oft are correlate,
Seldom a happy stroke can all its force abate.
Hunter to Faraday! 'twas epoch when the mind
Incessant soared, was ne'er in narrow bounds confined,
Early, directing glances far from human cares,
A magic found in aspects ever Nature wears;
Lost in admiring awe of such magnificence,
Zealously watched her hues and shapes and soul intense:
So Thomson, bravely tuneful, of the seasons writ,
Mild Cowper roamed afield, sang pleasures exquisite.
And some a backward look on hoary annals cast,
Deep interest showed in habits, customs of the past:
Belauding ancient traits, chivalry, good knights' skill,
O'er history Scott threw glamour, would new tastes instil.
Linked Coleridge, fetterless, fancies about him, weird
Romance and influence; into strange mysteries peered;
And Shelley great of mind, free as air would live;
Valuing life afresh, valiant ideals must give;
Ethereal, sincere, since he no Godhead saw
Was of his children's care deprived by rigorous law.
Woke some the furious ire of critics ponderous,
As fared the hapless, youthful Keats mellifluous;
Byron of inner sorrow, woman, satire fond,
Enchanting wielder of a widely potent wand;
And sturdy Wordsworth oft on Nature gazing rapt;
Soaring, or thoughtful, or in homely story apt.

LXVII

Still, as the mass of men scarce find pursuits entice,
Which with high knowledge deal, laborious and precise,
So, few in poetry discover a true balm,
Misery-curing, gracious, causing radiant calm.
Rather, who often need diversion and relief
After their meed of toil, shunning instruction brief,
Prefer awhile to witness, on a puppet stage,
Impressive hopes and fears or love's unending rage.
Wherefore, romancists zealous, using gifts aright,
Depicting different natures, all the world delight,
Ay, if disposed at times to reprimand or praise,
Assuredly can thought, ideas and custom raise.
Through his gaunt armoured knight, that e'en at windmills rode,
Cervantes struck a blow at chivalry's false code;
By his peals boisterous, monk Rabelais (turned leech)
Or with coarse irony, could vile abuses reach.
A prodigy of force, fierce Swift his sting implants,
Unmoved reveals that ills' narration him enchants,
Would remedy at cost of culprits he derides,
As Aristophanes, with mocking laughter, chides.
But, now, a gentler race employs a magic blest,
Subtly subdues the mind, enthrals with interest!
Glitters diversity unending in their tale
That yet allow a hidden purpose to prevail,
Accept the privilege, at ease mankind to limn
And subtly, now and then, virtues especial hymn!
Ah, mighty is his power can so the pen control,
The fruits of ardour ripe bring comfort to man's soul,

Arouse to pity, scorn, or wide pervading joy;
Forming a picture real, aim evils to destroy!
Dickens, courageous amid youthful sorrows, tears,
Sustaining early pride thwarted through anxious years,
Ever possessed a heart by wretchedness laid bare,
Distilling tenderness for many a woe and care.
Who had observed the poor help to each other give,
Would undertake the task of teaching how to live;
And, being blest by Nature with swift piercing eyes
Dark moods to penetrate and bright ones recognise,
Had treasured traits and actions seen where'er he strayed,
Enraptured by the fertile vistas he surveyed.
Intending, of set purpose, sentiment to stir,
Adverse or favourable; as they do well or err,
Upon his characters valiantly he bestows
Such qualities pronounced as varied trends disclose;
Now skilfully sets forth, and now with vigorous brush
Enshapes the buoyant spirits life is apt to crush;
Ambitious speeds to summon an abounding host
Of folk competing which shall win our hearts the most.
Imagination led him unto numerous shores,
And finds who follows thither, as he keen explores,
The denizens oft show a humour passing droll,
Vividly features that among the quick enroll.
But liking no pretence, hating the false and mean,
Ne'er feared the moralist to let his soul be seen;
E'er cruelty and cant, hypocrisy full loathed,
Shame, tyranny and vice in garb repulsive clothed;
Added to gaiety and lessened human ill,
Shines forth a master where none other has his skill.

LXVIII

Learning through books to make a sober wide appeal,
Aimed thinkers soon to find sound objects for their zeal,
Choosing prosaic methods, and to logic given,
With earnest argument for human rights had striven;
As Bentham, murmuring the laws in harshness err,
Good of the greatest number every heart should stir;
And Mill, embodiment of intellect acute
Anxious for proof exact and social wont's pursuit.
A lord of sentences that startle and amaze,
Stern prophet and fierce critic of men's deeds and ways,
The strenuous Carlyle must half the world impeach,
Exhibit rugged feelings, but a hearing reach.
So, when a bounteous epoch fertile Turner bare
To show how Nature hues majestical may wear,
Who rapturously strove, with subtlest force would seize,
Depict surpassingly the scenes his soul could please;
Then ardent Ruskin the great laws of beauty chaste
Treated pellucidly, upraised his fellows' taste.
Deft, with rich rhetoric, confident and elate
Historian Macaulay judged, would castigate;
While lifted Tennyson his pure and noble voice,
A prince of melody who many made rejoice;
And, long-neglect, sage Browning summed in verse compact
How men and women inly reason, feel and act.
But Thackeray betrayed in stories fine of form
A gifted cynic can conceal a heart is warm;
Mordant denouncing in high places fault and sin,
Yet, for his loving goodness, should affection win.

LXIX

And some most erudite toward other pleasures turned,
To pierce strange mysteries of previous Ages burned.
Even ere Darwin spake, calm Lyell earnest told
Secrets of this our globe and habitation old;
As when in Pozzuoli, questioning the earth,
He gained strange evidence through ancient pillars' worth
Which clearly indicate, titanic forces toil
Ever beneath our feet, stir forward, then recoil,
Labour uneasily; so, on a temple-floor
By Cicero was trod, now ocean-currents pour;
Which, as prove worm-holes, surely reached a higher brink;
Soared since the classic epoch, could next downward sink.
And bravely they took strides that, scanning Nature's face,
Found signs of ancient life beneath the ground we pace;
Even, contestants zealous, in new warfare mixed
As to man's origin, despite tradition fixed.
Concerning a First Cause, says one he nothing knows,
'Tis learned Huxley oft thus controversial glows.
But Newman, saintly prelate, troubled for his Church,
Greedy for spiritual joys, shuddered at science' search;
Like Gladstone the impassioned, who for progress wrought,
Thralling thronged listeners, allured them to his thought;
While cool Disraeli pregnant statesmanship displayed,
Or, glittering in debate, effectively inveighed.

LXX

True is it, e'en the great, with time becoming small,
Grow surely less distinct or fade beyond recall;
Were satisfied to labour, lavishing their best,
Employed each talent well, then passed to final rest.
Awhile they live in books, but yield at length such place
To others, who in turn have influenced the race!

As differ poets all, in nature, soul and aim,
Method and attitude and hope of winning fame;
Shall even offer witness, contrasts without end
Distinguish human force, the higher gifts attend;
So lofty Arnold pleases with a sadness chaste;
And Swinburne next through fancies sensuous of taste;
While gentle Francis Thompson, suited but to soar
In soft transcendency, can suffer and adore.

But e'er that vigorous and bold, prolific age,
Toward milder ways advanced, reforms and methods sage!
It viewed prosperity's continuance at last,
Happiness of a nation rich with commerce vast,
Such tolerance that sects religious must abound,
While learned men with knowledge, widely could astound.

Strenuous citizens sought simple means or wealth,
Through work or pleasure reaped a measure of full health,
Were much inclined to choose a narrow avenue,
In science, arts or law a special mistress woo,
Upon the busy mart, in every industry,
Concern them with one object, and none other see;
While e'er the middlemen performed a function wide,
Distributed what toilers hastened to provide;
And countless chiefs of arts and industries arose,
Triumphed great engineers, ameliorating woes;
And active spirits wandered, must afar explore
In Africa or Asia, stream, mount, vale and shore!

LXXI

Now, ere this mightiness an epoch could adorn,
Never surpassed since Britain first saw kingship born;
What meed of admiration seem they to invite,
Who, from a lofty seat, face time's insistent light?
Four monarchs in succession mounting a proud throne
Neglected not to show a mind and will their own.
To Hanover the first in spirit showed him true,
Asked but untroubled ease with mistresses but two;
Spite wedded bliss, the next, prone to more generous love,
Dying was judged by priests but fit for heaven above;
The third was better and yet stubbornly must choose
A vast and distant prize, past remedy, to lose;
While, if the last aspired in something to succeed,
Effortless, by his moods he could abhorrence breed.
Then veering destiny sent higher happiness,
As 'twere, in proper time repentance to express!

LXXII

Long on a splendid throne for which the bold must strive,
Even before thy birth, that puissance should arrive,
As Plassy's zealous victor ruling a far folk;
And one, near old Quebec, Montcalm's resistance broke;
As captains valorous who rounded stormy capes,
Beneath the Southern Cross sought fortune's newer shapes;
As Nelson spying not the signal to retreat,
And Wellington, the calm, inflictor of defeat;
Victoria, Empress-Queen! thy dear name worthily
Must shine for thou wert all a monarch well could be!

A simple girlhood gave thee an unsullied heart,
While a mild shrewdness taught to fill a regal part,
Whom soon a consort helped of high, enlightened aim,
But left through darkened years sadly to mourn his name,
Arouse fresh sympathy, surrounded stay with those
Could steadfast comfort thee until thy life should close;
Of whom our George remains the nation's hope and prayer!
'Twas thine to gather praise and, honoured deep, to share
As year succeeded year, the realm's advance in force,
With judgment cool and wisdom ripe adapt thy course;
Sound counsel lend to such as steer the barque of State,
A pure example set to womanhood, sedate
And dignified, and well content to feel assured,
That in thy noble guise the spectacle matured
Of steadfast righteousness, sure influence must hold,
An instance passing price before mankind unfold.
Such sovereign goodliness a high repute could earn
In many a foreign Court, and hearts o'erseas which yearn
For Britain's true regard; nay, yet in furthest lands
That knew thy gracious rule, thy name for virtue stands,
A link still wonderful to bind the scattered brood
Of nations old and nations young in blessed mood
Of long enduring peace, respect and sympathy,
Welding an empire vast whose boast is liberty,
Confident in the nature of its matchless might
In freedom to remain, grandeur ensue and right!

PARIS

JOY OF LIFE

Earth but revolves to yield a pleasant home
Where I may smiling labour, later rest,
Among good friends win jollity and jest;
In sylvan scenes or sacred precincts roam,
Dally nigh flowers or scan a wondrous dome;
Maintain for rapture, blissful hours a zest,
Choosing enchantments, think upon the best,
As Venus' birth in curling wave and foam.
Far will I travel, lands wide o'er and sea,
Avoiding ills, strive irksome care to drown,
Wait till success shall glorious effort crown;
Observing much, light-hearted live and free,
Thrilled and assured, years future ne'er could frown,
Nay, beauteous skies and love were made for me!

PARIS

Might dwell invisible in ancient sites and stones
An essence magical for evils past atones;
Since years possess the power to remedy despair,
Alleviate old wrongs, with glamour fill the air!

I

Wouldst at an era glance and pass in quick review
Something that man has been and humankind could do?
Then to a City famed throughout the world entire,
For its gay joyousness and intellectual fire
Briefly direct thy thought, as scarce a spot on Earth
Offers more rich reward, is such attention worth.
Girt by a moat so broad, its waters caused dismay,
Guarded by kindly hills and marshy forests, lay
An island home secure. There, the Parisii plied,
As merchants, a brisk trade upon a sluggish tide;
Were of a Celtic race, with hardiness endowed,
E'en at an early date, fierce, glory-loving, proud.
Now Cæsar roving wide, deems Gallia most fair
And he directs his men, making the Seine their care,
Lutetia's isle to threat. The tribesmen soon awake,
Their houses burn, a stand on a hill southern take,
Intend to grind the foe between the native force
And friends placed northerly. The legions steer like course,
Traverse the flood by night, dawn confident await,
Need not their virile souls with effort animate.

So, when the foremost Gauls into the stream would drive
Foes for whom arms the best and perfect methods strive,
In thousands they succumb before Rome's soldiers bold;
For fate had deep designs, new wonders would unfold;
Perchance by some sly genius settled in the soil,
Was urged from obstacles in no way to recoil,
Nay, with a foresight sharp, schemed for a nobler strain
Of men than earlier France was able well to gain.
Now, as magnificent and manifold result,
Worship druidical lapsed for a higher cult;
While on the City-isle adherents of great Jove
So energetic wrought that soon a people throve.
From semi-savage ways was granted a release,
Long conflicts barbarous became imperial peace;
Whence, on the spot which yet sees men to justice schooled,
Rome's standards were upraised and law and statecraft ruled.
But the arena's bloody cruelties survived,
Till a blest spiritual hour for human souls arrived,
When valiant missionaries entered within the gate,
Lacked merely miracles, a victory to await.
Then angels unto Denis a strange vigour lent,
That held his severed head and footsteps northward bent;
The while at Tours, Saint Martin, slicing with his sword
His mantle for the poor, gathered a rich reward.

Well could religion fail when marvels such were rained?
Converts appearing were successfully obtained
Of puissance paramount. So faith became more strong,
If yet in turn, again the purple could belong
To one heretical.
For on that southern hill,
Where in the Panthéon, philosophy dares fill
A part complete when honoured ashes seek the ground,
Once a loud shouting told, the legionaries had found
A Cæsar to their choice. 'Twas Julian they proclaimed,
A chief and soaring sage at times unfairly blamed,
Who loved Lutetia's vines and crisp delicious air,
Dwelt on the destiny man shall with Cosmos share.
But he nor others saved the Empire from its fate,
And Gaul, than higher Rome no-way more fortunate,
Smit sharp by further hordes, into confusion fell,
Though it saw Geneviève fierce Attila repel;
Yet failed she Childeric from Paris walls to turn,
If viewing, at the last, Christ's flame within him burn.
Now took religion strides; e'en Clovis, conqueror rude,
Yet mighty of his kind, died with the faith imbued,
Who so had helped the Church she soon began to thrive,
Treat doubters with the sword, for further triumphs strive.
Next Childebert's young son from threatened death was saved,
Whereon the warrior sire with gratitude behaved,
Churches to build was led by Saint Germain, the pure,
A bishop of renown who breathed but to secure
Rome's certain dominance; is still perpetuate
Southerly of the stream which has not known abate

His influence spiritual.
And came in further while,
A yet more splendid temple on the City isle.
Disposed to gather records and a creed imbue,
How Notre Dame's vast site could memories renew!
Where eagle-standards waved and Cæsar proudly trod,
And sailors of the city worshipped Jove as God;
An altar rose at last, magnificent to Christ,
And bore Saint Étienne's name (through stoning sacrificed),
Ministered through the years to higher human needs,
E'er watched the chequered play of good and evil deeds.
Alas! it happened France once more by war was curst
And murders, oh, most foul, lives dissolute the worst,
And women's violence and treason, dark and mean,
Since Brunehaut and Frédegonde would each be Queen,
Of whom upon Seine's margin one must die in shame,
Incurring awful vengeance for her wretched fame.
But darkness did not stay bereft of aught to cheer;
Night's gloom could call, and make great luminaries appear.
What dangers terrible impended o'er the race,
When boldly toward the Moors Charles Martel turned his face!
And loss supreme it were; if ne'er had breathed the air
A Charlemagne (desirous ruling power to share
'Twixt pope and emperor great) who, vigorous of life,
For toil insatiate, ay, a giant in the strife,

Welded together States, and stirred up moralists,
Founded a name will last as long as rule persists!
Yet, when such lights were gone, dim grew once more the sky,
Although relieved by flames piratical and high,
For Paris sank a prey to the dire, hideous scourge
Of Norsemen pitiless, who constant roamed to urge,
In dark ships venturesome, havoc's appalling cue
And raging armour-girt, each they could capture, slew.
At length these robbers deem the hour is come to cease
Barbarities extreme, attune their minds to peace;
Still long, from strongholds safe, chiefs feudal can descend,
Far terrify, and force dependents weak to bend
Tremulous knees to them (though oft are preached crusades,
And then awhile the serf his misery evades)
Or these ambitious lords wage 'gainst each other wars,
Pursue their haughty trade till blood in torrents pours.
So rises Bernard grave, abbot and famous Saint
Who can admonish kings, make souls with Heaven acquaint,
Begets an atmosphere in which some daring dream
Of a new fane, than old Saint Étienne's more supreme.
Therefore, in settled years, seeking for favours high,
Upon the ancient site, men building worthily,
Are stirred by gratitude towards one is held most dear,
The Mother of a Saviour all with awe revere.
In memory of whom they raise a splendid fane,
Hope through her intercession pardon to obtain;

'Midst thronging houses tall, and crooked narrow ways,
Erect a monument the Ages to amaze;
Sure testimony bear to what mankind could do,
When solemn ecstasy entered the daily view.
Nor failed, beside such home of stately loveliness
As would refined and purest attributes impress,
To gather canons and the sweet-voiced choristers
Who glow with ardour which the colder layman spurs.
'Tis here stern Fulbert lives, exhibits fearful ire,
When Abélard and gentle Héloise conspire
Dreaming not lovers true can ever come to woe
Such as it falls to them, alas! to undergo,
Still less, an era late shall seek to know the place
Which perturbate beheld their tremulous embrace.
Seldom was epoch when such sanctity obtained!
For monks and nuns, and bishops, priests securely reigned;
Abounded valiant soldiers who no guerdon sought
Since 'twas enough, to win Christ's sepulchre they fought;
And pious people pled with hushed and earnest voice,
Solemnly, frequent knelt to reliquaries choice;
Or entering Notre Dame, hoped that a statue fair
Might bow its gentle head and sympathy declare;
Or anguished wept before the holy crown of thorns,
Chief jewel of that Chapelle which the world adorns.
Still, it appealed to one, finding a method shrewd,
Deserting not the soul, to make the mind less rude!
While Saint Denis was honoured in the abbey great
Where tombs of countless kings survive in glorious state;

And the blest Virgin's image a vast home had found;
A chaplain, Robert Sorbonne, newly breaking ground,
Implanted firm a tree which, branching far, sent forth
Such buds of knowledge as, west, east and south and north,
Developed into blossoms of surpassing hue,
Supplied fruit manifold, yet fructified anew.
Wouldst tread the ancient place which saw the fine act done?
The church of 'Julien Pauvre' reveals it, better none;
Approach the hallowed spot, nor hurriedly depart!
Hither come students even to the forage mart:
Ay, on the Southern bank collects a learned world,
Where, against ignorance, a standard is unfurled
Arousing hopefulness within each struggling soul
That would itself for letters as recruit enrol.
Can here, 'neath rector's ruling, gather scholars more,
And disputants almost than man has seen before!
Yet fierce remained the Age; nor holy men nor wise
Changed the necessity gross sinners to chastise.
Alas! the weak were doomed in peril oft to cower,
'Twas a disordered epoch of scarce shackled power
When the crude law of might, stern ruthlessness and rage
Signalled for vigorous hands wickedness to assuage;
So while the holy Church would ways and morals mould,
The puissance of the king the City-isle controlled,
And a stern fortress rose strong upon either shore,
Grim Châtelets guarded bridges, order could restore.

II.

When autumn robs the fields of e'en the humblest flower,
And threats the sheltering thicket and the leafy bower;
Afar, appear on high, where all is cloudy grey
Or empyrean blue not yet has passed away,
A swift winged company of majesty supreme;
South-making for a land unknown of which we dream:
In which determined flight 'tis open to our view,
That one prefers to lead, while others close pursue.
Thus can a monarch prove him of consummate worth,
Through settled governance assist well-being's birth,
Since harmony is needed causes to advance,
And o'ercome obstacles, prosperity enhance.
In France, the beautiful, a captain must control,
Weld the land's glories till they glitter as a whole!
So, where the Louvre rich gleams, a Sovereign of high fame,
The warrior Philippe Auguste, deeming all to tame,
Upreared a citadel with donjon frowning bare,
As well, four lofty towers guarding a courtyard square,
About men's habitations set a girdle-wall
Allowing none to 'scape, enter without a call.
Longing to help the weak by feudal might afflict,
Fierce barons' overwhelming privilege restrict,
Freely Saint Louis justice-emissaries chose,
Ordered his parliament as legists shrewd to pose;
Ay, on the green, himself oft judgments pure forth-dealt
Beside where stands Pont Neuf, whose charm by each is felt.

'Twas there a Philippe Bel revengeful viewed the flame
Torment Knights Templar, who to cruel treatment came
Because, no longer wont mild pilgrims to protect,
In opulence they nourished notions to be checked.
He was the monarch great who held up Rome to scorn,
Let mighty Boniface by rudeness be o'erborne,
At Avignon could keep a pontiff well in sight,
Called first the three Estates to help him in a fight.
And then rose other Kings, as Philippe, foe renowned
That failed on Crecy's field to hold his chosen ground,
Slaughtered his foreign bowmen since, in skill outmatched,
From Englishmen they had not a swift victory snatched!
Alas! as if the country were not fallen low,
Fate had it she must further woeful trials know.
Within men's midst arose a rumour, terror vague,
Then sudden widely spread a pestilence, foul plague,
Driving each mocking scoffer headlong to the priest,
Or rousing recklessness until the peril ceased;
Awaking dubious thought of God's benevolence,
Yet bringing not the mind to such intelligence
As, with unwholesome ways no more to deal being loth,
Shall errors set aside and vanquish wonted sloth.
Which blackest of all deaths to cries of mourning stirred,
Nor yielded till it slew of folk a grievous third!

Next, from the south, the English landing in brave might,
Pillaging Languedoc, old insults sharp requite!
Whence Sovereign John, the good, a whip of scorpions used,
Seized what he wished for war, however men refused;
Which roused the three Estates courageously to say:—
'Twas theirs to gather taxes! all a share must pay!
Meanwhile, the hardy English, driven to extremes,
Laid ambush amidst hedges, slew beyond their dreams,
Carried the king from Poictiers captive o'er the foam;
So mercenaries set free to maim and burn and roam,
From the poor peasant tear whate'er their passions craved,
E'en to the smallest hoard from grasping seigneurs saved.
Wherefore sad wretches rising, show a taste for strife,
O'ercome the nobles with or axe or scythe or knife,
Slaughter the petty lords who, ransoms to obtain,
Would harass with fresh dues and falsely serfs arraign!
One at such an hour it was, well the States-General led,
Sturdiest Étienne Marcel, that lone efforts sped
The people to enfranchise, e'en the land set free
From feudal insolence and princely tyranny.
Ay, sending to their death King's officers o'erproud,
Though Royalty within the Louvre had humbly bowed,
He, minding not that ire gleamed on the Dauphin's face,
The cap of red and blue above it dared to place!

True Marcel longs to see a guidance popular,
Against despotic rule levies an open war;
But lacks a due support and soon his life has lost:
The hero of an era, bloody, tempest-tossed.
Forgets not Sovereign Charles the insult lately borne,
Builds him a palace, far from where he suffered scorn!
In luxury and ease, completes he Marcel's wall,
With frequently a Bastille foemen to appal;
And past St. Antoine sets a fort of towers eight,
Most sinister of look and greedy for men's hate.
Then rioting and terror root them in the train
Of governance; as when, a levy harsh to gain
From one within the Halles, an officer smites hard,
Stirring the citizens, who, outrage to retard,
Use lustily a stock unearthed of loaded staves,
Stored to send Englishmen unto untimely graves.
Dissembles now the Court and says the tax shall cease,
But throws the leaders in the Seine to make for peace!
So seethe the people, rage, lock, bar the King without,
Yet parley and submit to save themselves from rout,
Behold their monarch come with a triumphant force
To punitory devices forthwith have recourse.
Again, Parisians arm as if for deeds of wrong,
Ready, in order, stand, full twenty thousand strong,
Offer the mildest words, when asked what, there, they do,
Loyal report themselves, unto their Sovereign true,
Who enters on the morrow by St. Denis gate,
Employs his men-at-arms, zealous as one irate,
Grimly directs the hangman, e'en for two score days,
To awe the over-bold, the disaffect amaze.

III

'Twas an Age strenuous and the best argument
Succeeded not except dire force to it was lent,
As reckoned Jean Sanspeur, renowned Burgundian duke,
Harsh aspects of whose tower in Rue Marcel rebuke
Concepts of gentle life. He views in far crusade
By ruthless Bajazet his army headless made!
Returning soon to Paris, envy cannot smother,
Orders to lie in wait and slay his Prince's brother.
Thereon his friends, capped-blue, and Armagnacs, scarfed-white,
Trample a tortured land, incessantly requite,
Till by St. Germain's gate he enters subtily,
Drives pity from his thought, and slaying, issues free
To weigh in conference a well-enduring truce;
But swiftly falls himself, through treachery's vile use.
At such a moment dark, invaders of the land,
Led by a dashing captain potent to command,
Transfix at Agincourt defenders, a great host
Of horsemen clad in steel, immobile at their post.
Then anguish-worn uprises a strange wondrous child,
Through her dear country's ills, to conflict reconciled.

IV

Tending her father's sheep within a forest glade,
Jeanne d'Arc can ponder o'er a prophecy long made,
A virgin chaste shall rescue France from fearful woes;
And Orleans now is sieged by stubborn British foes!

In ecstasy she lists to voices whispering, Speed!
Straightway, the Dauphin seek, nor rest till he is freed
From horrid islanders; forth drive them from the realm!
So, gentle seventeen, in a cuirass and helm,
Grasping upon a steed her sword and banner fast,
Leads on her troops until the hostile lines are passed,
Whereat the valiant garrison amazed is spurred
To effort fresh. And Bedford's men, a paltry third
Of their antagonists and feeble, falter soon,
With forts and trenches gone, surrender. Once to swoon
Even next Jeanne was seen, and yet she seemed inspired;
Whence, fearing witchery, the English slow retired.
Stands by the Maid, upholds the lily-flag renowned,
When Charles is joyously in Rheims Cathedral crowned,
Nor shows she lassitude nor any other fault,
At gate St. Honoré, e'en Paris dares assault;
But captured at Compiègne, to over-zeal a prey,
(For her determination ne'er has given way)
Falls she to England bartered; and the Holy Church,
That is the Inquisition, making rigorous search,
Finds her a heretic, a sorceress, and then
A pile of wood is brought, and brutal fighting men
In circle watch the burning of an earnest Maid
Whose tale must ever live for the grand part she played.

As mocking laughter ceased and vanished ribald jeers,
'Tis said, the soldiery, late conscience-struck, shed tears:
But never the dishonour of that Rouen square
From memory will 'scape, a wished oblivion share!
Pierre Cauchon, bishop, judge! right well didst thou erect
A fane to expiate thy sinful harsh neglect!

V

Now clearer grows the night, though thunders yet shake France,
But battle is afar and Paris can advance;
Though in some donjon drear, as high Vincennes for choice,
Plaguing each hostile soul, letting his own rejoice
A Louis craftier than men have seen before,
Shackles his nobles' might, and makes his kingdom's more.
Still, strife ensures its woes and Frenchmen know their doom,
O'er menace Italy, thus pass from joy to gloom!
Then sways a Francis gay, in whom art's spirit burns,
And he, with treasures laden, from adventure turns,
Supplies a new delight to souls that seek relief
From daily sordid cares and life's o'er frequent grief.
This warrior, at home, by classic skill enthralled,
Desiring progress, culture, richest forms forth called,
Aroused a willing nation, nourished a fine strain
Of love for sensuous things, order's consummate reign:
With beauties limned or wrought, pillars, façade and roof,
Lifted the mind's horizon, pled in man's behoof,

Valuing every force which could assist his folk,
Triumphant evidence of fancy would evoke.
Who careful views the Louvre's vast edifice may read,
Proudly successive Kings magnificence could breed;
O'er men dominion gain, and high ambition mould,
Teaching how glories new should add to glories old.
In silent sadness, too, some ancient mansions rest,
Linking with other days, against our age protest:
As a small dainty turret whence de Clisson gazed,
Soon on the field to grow by English might amazed;
Or that Hôtel de Sens for an Archbishop meant,
But in the course of time to gay Queen Margot lent.
Oft venerable stones their part memorial fill,
And others stood, where linger recollections still:
So, on a southern height, long with her fame acquaint,
A home of books recalls the name of Paris' saint.
Twas there a college famous and the strictest rose,
And needy struggling scholars wept for common woes.
Starves almost thus Erasmus desperate to acquire
Learning enough to set a continent on fire;
Whose tales of Church abuses soon the true appal,
At once prepare the way for Luther's rousing call.
E'en here stern Calvin reads, lightheartedness confutes,
Buttresses zealous faith with Christian Institutes;
Lives Loyola that holds:—sanctioned are means by ends!
Only commands stay valid which the General sends!
Soars near at hand a fane for rood-screen gorgeous famed,
Shrouding good Pascal's bones, who Jesuits' ire inflamed;

He that with earnestness to science long held fast,
Loved chaste and polished thought, alas, to suffering passed!
Lay buried nigh St. Paul's within a charnel ground,
For higher honours seeming scarce enough renowned,
Humanist Rabelais who mingles in strange tales
Jest and sagacity, deep evils rife assails;
Yet in his wish to cure, or hint at treatment meet,
License allows himself and methods indiscreet.
Haunted dark narrow streets and scenes of disrepute
Sweet singer Villon, till his passing, dissolute;
Of fortune favoured less than Ronsard tender, gay,
E'er subtly choosing words the lyric gift display.
Nor always blest was Marot! that for psalms translate,
On his poetic head brought down the Sorbonne's hate,
So fled the Place Maubert where Dolet great was burned,
The brave and pious printer, to new doctrine turned.

VI

But such as changed their faith and asked a creed's reform,
Must face the horrors of a devastating storm!
Marks the Tour L'Auxerrois, of old a hallowed spot
Where Coligny, first reached by an assassin's shot,
With vision shrewd and swift, the hostile plan divined;
Wherefore the Queen and hers trusty supporters find,
Who bid each Catholic, showing at once his worth,
As tolls the signal bell, to strike a foe to earth.

Falls Coligny and swift, hell's force at last let loose
Severs compassion's bond, ruptures the Social truce:
With sounds of "Never spare," "No heretic reprieve,"
Grim vengeance fails not on Bartholomew's sad eve!
Nigh lofty Tour St. Jacques rose a conventual church,
Wherein pursuers for offenders might not search;
And criminals were many 'mongst the turbulent,
Whence a detected fault loud called for punishment!
Ah, hideous were the scenes the Place de Grêve oft saw,
From gibbetings of those that slightly outraged law,
To breaking on the wheel of felons desperate,
And burning of the bold whose faith displeased the State!
Yet as if stayed a need for torment worse than all,
To kindle low delight or horribly appal,
Such as should dare to wound the sovereign King must die
Long tortured, as by fiends Satanic, ruthlessly,
Ay, lastly test the strength of straining horses four,
While haughty courtiers smiled, and to relent forbore!
See here, a narrow street where iron-workers dwelt,
And idolized Navarre the fatal dagger felt
Of one, who climbed the chariot where the throng was dense;
Had grown disordered by fanaticism intense,
And calm before dread pangs of torment dire renewed,
Predicted on that day his sufferings would be rude!
The warrior-King had loved his people and the State,
Given to creeds new freedom, made the land elate;

While, if his passions were inclined at times to rise,
So that judicious souls his actions thought unwise,
Chose he as minister sage Sully: "Could him spare"
"Less well than ten such loves as Gabrielle the fair!"

Which duke of just intent and active noble mind,
On France benignant looked and Paris not unkind,
Whose palace decorate in a St. Antoine court,
Stands yet where once the high were wonted to resort.

Turn to the Place des Vosges, 'tis of historic fame:
Amidst vast pageantry monarchs oft hither came.
So, the square desolate could glow with brightest lists,
As when Montgomery in tournament resists
The second Henri, slays; but expiates his crime;
Hearts of the Medici were softened not by time!

'Neath arches regular, well-ordered brick and stone,
The spacious colonnades their recollections own,
For caution scarcely sways the gentlemen of France,
Who despite edicts stern, to duels there advance,
Sure of the hangman's cord, an if they 'scape their foes,
Since Richelieu frowns severe on all his rules oppose.

Electing favourites who seldom from her roam,
Ninon the beautiful near-by selects a home,
And, being pressed to choose a convent for her meet,
Suggests the Cordeliers might offer a retreat!
Yet is allowed to stay, as loveliness allures,
And if combined with wit, protection high ensures.

But haunts a spirit purer too, this quarter old!
Where keenest Sévigné in letters could unfold
In happiest of moods whate'er she careless learnt;
And even how she saw Brinvilliers, headless, burnt.

For lapsed but leisurely the usage of harsh force,
Yet was abandonment of many a custom coarse,
And woman in walled Paris helped the march of mind,
Soft puissance exercised, gay, shrewd, tyrannic, kind.
While crafty statesmen dealt with lords and Huguenots,
And moulded so the nation that kings higher rose,
Matrons and maids a subtle new dominion gained;
Ay, a distinguished dame, that common things disdained,
Welcoming many guests in Salons elegant,
And showing qualities of converse can enchant,
Could ban with effort coarseness, gallantry defeat,
Strove in Hôtel Rambouillet witty folk should meet;
Where glittering cavaliers and gracious ladies fair
Exchanged due courtesies with a consummate air.
As in a heaven compact, here oft a fine orb moved,
And, coruscating grandly, claims to honour proved:
Since spirit, poetry and pregnant intellect
Treatment encouraging and praises could expect.
Hither one gloomy comes who rouses Richelieu's spite,
Drawing the Cid, has thrilled the many with delight;
Another limns sad Phèdre, a woman who racked, torn,
Loved one an earlier wife had to their husband borne.
Now can de Scudéry with lengthy love-tales please,
Gracious De Longueville charms a band of devotees,
Voiture declaims in verse of agile light address,
Malherbe, with rules severe, must poesy oppress.
Meanwhile strong Richelieu, of cold and granite will,
Grinds the recalcitrant, treats lords as in a mill,
Would raise a State wherein one, only, firm shall stand,
While others fearful quake, through an admiring land:

If but vast potency about the King be set,
Illustrious he will reign and glories true beget!

VII

Then destined to adorn a glowing firmament
Whereto the Monarch's presence ever grandeur lent,
A splendid genius came, showed merit of a sort
Allowing scarce dispraise or critical retort;
Remarkable as one that early would amuse,
Swiftly developed force, shone willing to infuse
Such active quality into his genial cup
As strengthens all who deign in mind with him to sup.
Great actor, dramatist, what blissful lot was thine!
Honoured in life for works e'en yet thy name enshrine!

Heir to the maker of the royal beds and chairs,
Young Poquelin, or Molière, rejects the law's affairs,
Chooses a course more free, surveys a prospect rich,
Then settles comedy his fancy shall bewitch.
Each foible he must draw, his fellows entertain,
Display dexterity, men's admiration gain!

Calls he together some whom Thespis can allure,
Insists a public art demands ripe talents sure;
Alas! soon luckless sighs, and roams with actors brave
That, in the country far, reveal how men behave
And women in events which every day are rife:
Depict the primal passions and their ceaseless strife.

Such years adventurous, and traits within, conspire,
Lead Molière's gentle soul to treat of love's desire,
Ambition plant in him, much as the lightnings flash,
Through art to reach men's minds, even apply a lash,
Scornful, correctional. On highway or in town,
He marks each smile, caprice, tear, sharp remark or frown;

So, offering the world a cup for all to quaff,
He tempers bitterness with wisdom and a laugh.
Happy in destiny, soon coming to the ken
Of a grand Monarque who a god lives among men;
Ne'er Molière fails at fêtes which, sumptuously fair,
Lighten the irksomeness of fetters courtiers wear.
To please his friend august, that judges well of wit,
He limns vain elegants ever impelled to flit
Across the Sovereign's view; next, with a piercing dart,
Attacks the fatuous, compels the bores to smart.
Then, on a royal stage, with method excellent,
This player versatile, prolific e'er of bent,
Sets rustic dances quaint, in order that the King
Shall pirouetting hear delighted plaudits ring,
While royal mistresses outshine a glittering throng,
Can dazzle with seductions to the great belong.
But Molière deeper looks, intent on cynic schemes,
Searches his soul and treats of admirable themes;—
Are lovers' quarrels sharp and reconcilements swift
Not formed to fashion mirth and daily care uplift?
And if a wooer hoar incline to mould a maid,
His folly, 'spite his years, should be by woe repaid!
Certain is punishment, when, jealously inspired,
One seeks to keep his love from all the world retired!
A dotard may discover at the Church's door,
The beauty he has wed regards him for his store!
Learn shall the feeble wretch with an o'ersplendid wife,
A disadvantage chastens, overclouds his life!
Has Sganarelle not oft, as to his spouse deceived,
For her fault fanciful in maddest folly grieved?

See! Alceste rude and gloomy endless mocks and rails,
Suspecting in all women fickleness prevails!
The dainty Célimène, free as a butterfly
Speeding from flower to flower in winsome ecstasy,
Ne'er notices the wounds inflicted by her charms,
Again pouts pretty lips, anew for victory arms.
Sting could sage Molière's whip; all human vices reach;
Wide faults and blemishes effectively impeach!
From a dull preference for words of pompous length
Swaying the multitude opposed to solid strength,
Or tones particular of dames who haughty mince,
Waft precious epithets, a culture strange evince;
To fearful influence of passions uncontrolled
Against the force of moral maxims true as gold;
And strangeness of a miser not an hour in doubt,
If better 'tis, or love or pelf to do without;
And e'en hypocrisy of a lewd, evil thief,
Who sanctimonious lives and trades upon belief;
Over the gamut drear of weaknesses and sins
He runs with facile touch, and admiration wins!
Oh, contemplative soul directing thoughtful eyes
On imperfections viewed under whatever guise;
Wizard, whose nature was to charm with magic song,
Satirist, that could strike and yet conceal the thong;
Observer watchful for, or trivial careless fall
Or character's disastrous lapse beyond recall;
Exponent unsurpassed of dexterous wordy fence
By which contending wits show bright intelligence;
Sincere and valiant friend, e'er spendthrift of thy store!
A world recognisant is anxious to adore!
And yet the moralist, for others' guidance shrewd,
Ventured in middle age upon a journey rude,

Wedded a fickle damsel who could make him smart;
Forgiving her, oft suffered from an aching heart.
Stricken at last, 'twere well Molière had still remained;
But, turning to the scene, he wonted vigour feigned,
Then of a sudden died; that scarce could bear to think
His faithful company should into beggary sink;
For he had charity and countless gentle traits,
This potent humorist, whose sympathies amaze.

VIII

With different aim, a Louis of incarnate might,
Would to high majesty all other powers unite,
Shines irresistibly as if he were the sun,
Ever adventure covets ere the day is done;
Now wooing a rare maid, of silvery voice and chaste,
La Vallière, that allows him sweetest joys to taste,
Now meeting a marquise in whom a star he views,
De Montespan with charms a very god might choose.
Still, if the Monarch loves, he combats, e'er must strive,
Finding a stimulus when obstacles arrive,
Thus chances on a rival who vain splendour sought,
Fouquet, a meteor false to sudden darkness brought.
And he can glory gain through planets small afar,
Use Condé and Turenne as instruments of war;
Reserve some radiant lights beside him near attached,
Descartes profound, and Bossuet, orator unmatched,
Corneille the conqueror of heights before unknown,
And Racine notable for harmonies his own.
Next, drifts the eager Sovereign under threat of clouds,
Huguenots persecutes, fame previous enshrouds;

Lingering, leans on one subservient to his needs,
Whom Scarron once had loved; at last from view recedes.
Sore wretchedness ensuing smote an anxious land,
For debt on France the fair had set its fearful brand;
And rulers vile endeavoured morals to destroy,
Could shameful orgies hold, debaucheries enjoy;
Now to a Pompadour governance relegate,
Now cherish a Du Barry snatched from low estate;
Listlessly "lettres de cachet" on familiars heap,
That sent their enemies, untried, to dungeons deep.
Yet reigned the privilege of feudal seigneurs proud
Who the first marriage rights of vassals were allowed,
While great ecclesiastics, shorn of wed desires,
Slaked without secrecy their not unnatural fires.

IX

Surely had advocates of humanism won force,
Striving to demonstrate of welfare a fresh source.
Spake early sieur Montaigne, man of the world and shrewd,
Who the religious schemes, as from afar, reviewed;
Seeing them various, from choosing one refrained,
Deemed each of equal worth, with a like skill maintained;
Never had felt his heart toward persecution stirred,
Because, if men were wrong, they innocently erred.
Renowned Descartes, ere long, least hesitance without,
Stated all wisdom needs preliminary doubt;
Although to willing minds, that pass through reasoning's mists,
It may be facile shown, surely a God exists.

And yet, he made some sigh that, lacking logic's aid,
Had failed to understand a syllogism when made,
Or found, truth doctrinal is not self-evident,
E'en from the first allows debate and argument.
Knew he full well, the pious ask Creation's creed,
Yet said, mechanic laws must everything precede;
Deep reverenced the Church and stayed of peril ware,
Engaged in thought sublime, must dream, a way prepare
For mighty evolution's lofty theory bold,
Despaired of, sighed for by, Greek intellect of old.
Arose soon earnest Bayle, showing his learned mind
To difficulties greatest, smallest was not blind;
Dispassionate and coldly would examine all,
Then in a mighty tome with withering smile recall.
He finds that David's guilt, who wrought a fearful deed,
A hope for later kings, despite their crimes, must breed!
Nor draws he veil o'er aught can sate a wish for truth,
Even the passions marring Saint Augustine's youth,
Sadly complains that uses recently were made
Of such good father's zeal heretics to persuade.
Dares Bayle announce a God omnipotent must grieve
His folk are forced to hold tenets they scarce believe;
And, in a land unhappy, priests each soul would win,
Repeat, "To fill my house, compel them to come in!"
Nor any man the soul so full of truth can charge
But that he should his mind by every means enlarge;
Surely, mankind's ideas upon the Infinite
At once distorted are by smallness of their wit:
Who, in a search, through deep obscurity would strike,
Opinions numerous must summon though unlike!

So strangely, Bayle the flag of reason now unfurl'd,
Diminishing the gloom of a despondent world.

X

Exist two mighty forces oft shall elevate;—
Enthusiastic courage and a power to state
Ideas with impress such, mankind around give heed,
Decipher what is writ, and others send to read.
Doth any art compare with that which clear can place
Before the inner eye, concepts to lift the race;
So tellingly indite, unto the page men turn,
Again draw nigh to it; preferring words which burn,
And thrilling sentences, of sovereign influence
To fortify the weak, awake intelligence?
Seems it unnecessary to be a saint to preach,
If but a prophet feel the message in his reach;
And inly fevered by assurance of great wrong,
His is the daring to admonish e'en the strong.
Than François Arouet, soon famous as Voltaire,
Has a more puissant spirit breathed our modern air?
Ravished was Paris by the tall, vivacious youth,
Whose verses pleased the ear and spoke malicious truth;
A being of fiery soul that gave forth tongues of flame
Must shrivel up a foe, twist laughter out of fame;
Through mental energy arrived at joy intense,
Dazzled by brilliant wit a world-wide audience;
Could gifts satirical employ with magic sway,
And literary strength in every form display.
Epical "Henriade" confirmed him in men's sight
As one well skilled their tastes still classic to delight,
Or, in "Zäire," shew measured tragic pathos keen,
Even, in rude "Pucelle," a humour seldom seen.

He could flay optimists, as "Candide" witness bears,
Or offer benefit of Cyclopædic wares;
While if he history penned, it was as one who knows
So to direct his hand the page with action glows.
Relating valiantly the story of mankind,
In a way masterly the progress of the mind,
Contemned he nor the boor, nor higher citizen,
Speaking of mighty kings, forgot not they were men.
He held a meed of good is to the masses given;
Happiness comes to most who for it well have striven;
No man knows perfect bliss; excess than all is worse;
Virtue is goodly deeds; stays envy the chief curse!
Science but felt her way, and Voltaire, pondering thought
The wondrous Universe of special purpose wrought;
Was well disposed toward God and clearly showed his mind,
Upraised a little church, which travellers shall find.
Strove he throughout his life against a tireless foe;—
The power that never failed poor peasants to keep low
With superstition's blight. But, if oft fugitive,
Perchance to England driven, or Switzerland to live,
Ever he seemed alert to make the world humane,
Shrank at the cruelties which governments can stain.
Raging the poet blazed, denounced a hideous deed,
Since courts had slowly slain a youth that mocked the creed;
While soon the wheel, whereon the Church an old man broke,
By Voltaire so was turned, Europe from fear awoke:
Calas and young La Barre! your shrieks evoked the aid
Of one could give them pause an awful part had played!

Cried the philosopher, at last the time had ceased
For cleric insolence and ruling of the priest :
Touched upon divers subjects from the small to large,
Exhibited a wish sharp arrows to discharge,
With a consummate skill ecclesiastics warned,
They now too far presumed who pity's promptings scorned.
Seemed they not impious who made of God a fiend,
Surfeited so their pride and evil natures screened?
And diabolical, who, for religion warred
As ne'er had done, of old, idolaters abhorred?
With confident caprice, to mitigate their woes,
Our Lady blest of Ardens, or Loretto, chose?
At times the writer skilled took comfort in a sneer,
Refused to tame his voice, insisted all should hear;
Said 'twas a heavy task, however men aimed high
To bring perfection's scheme to faulty vision nigh ;
E'en Milton's poesy failed Heaven to pourtray,
Blurred it with powder's smoke, called cannon into play;
Ay, made the prince of devils, smarting from defeat,
Invite the Son of God to sit him down and eat!
Lucretius argued well, yet scarce could think aright
Because he lacked the aid of revelation's light!
Hebrews possessed the truth in days of Cicero,
Next, in Tiberius' hour, Christians alone could know!
Rudely Voltaire his sense would to the Scriptures lend,
Asked, who were on the ark the mighty throng to tend;
Was Genesis forbidden to the younger Jews,
Lest thought of One, their "image," should weak minds amuse ;

Niggardly showed him not of efforts barbed with wit,
Rather, a fighter of resources infinite.
Since Satan with the Christ high o'er the earth had moved,
The fact of magic is, said Saint Augustine, proved;
So, turning back to Endor, men could reasons give
Why scarce an aged crone permitted was to live!
Then, as a wasp disturbed must wildly use its sting,
Grim Voltaire ever newly could on victims spring,
Groaned because certain monks would not their greed abate,
Allowing slaves to beg without the convent gate;
Told of a serf whose skill in commerce gathered store,
But at his death, by law, must make the fathers' more;
And of the high and holy mystery of the Mass,
Which, for three sesterces, a priest would bring to pass,
Still, could no rite sublime and transcendental weave,
Did he the celebration's guerdon not receive!
Spake he of miracles? it was with icy scorn;
Of faith? in dogma's flesh he fixed a rankling thorn!
Or, praising ancient worships unalloyed by fear,
He cursed intolerance and shed therefor a tear;
So of Inquisitors the vile instructions gave,
Dug for their dominance a timely, needed grave;
For, e'en in neighbouring Spain, insensate zealots yet
Saw to it, few escaped cruel suppression's net!
What waves of indignation deep he must have felt,
Valiant 'spite memories of all the Bastille spelt
For critics of the great!
Of temper wont to boil
At personal affront or wrongs to Gallic soil,

E'er was he true; had passions warm; would never yield,
Of nature adamant, longed for the battle-field,
There raised his sword and smote surpassingly nor spared,
Wrought for his country till her people for him cared.
Since, taking it to heart, ecclesiastic wealth
Gigantic and untaxed, impaired the nation's health;
Desiring, in his dreams, a Church affected not
By callous bigotry and persecution's blot;
Knowing, 'midst misery, thrive lessened trust and hope
And men are worse prepared with daily ills to cope;
Wise thought it he, to snatch from arrogance its force,
Against credulity invoke a new resource.
Abuses stirred his anger, wrongs his deadly hate
Who made it a high calling, evils to abate,
Proving that one, through life, the marriage bond withstood,
If he showed blemishes, could toil for wondrous good.

XI

And there is other sway;—by words the mind to touch,
Gentler emotions rouse in magic manner such
That, yielding, men incline to hear the pleader's voice,
Scarce question what is said, whene'er he speaks, rejoice!
In eloquence lies strength, seductive, gracious, sweet,
To guide, instil, suggest, or movingly entreat!
Some almost worship one that wields this heavenly might,
Unwilling seem to ponder when they know delight;

O'ercome by feeling, let their reason sink subdued,
Torn from its seat, dethroned, repelled as that is rude!
Amid soft witchery of bright Geneva's shore,
First Jean Jacques Rousseau, learning Nature to adore,
The moods extravagant of childhood overstept,
Both when he gladness knew, or being troubled, wept.
But fate, deciding he, betimes, the world should face,
A bliss too brief with lengthy misery replace,
Drove him from home, the sport of an o'erfeeling heart;
Young, through his father's weakness and his own to smart.
In vain for kindness he with a hard master pled,
Harshness and stripes encountered, so a wanderer fled,
Tortuous paths pursued among companions coarse,
Acquiring vagrant habits, 'scaped not dire remorse.
And watched he constantly the wretched struggling poor
Relentless taxed, e'er forced in silence to endure:
Would rueful meditate henceforth on sadness rife,
Even when fortune smiled and changed his mode of life.
For, at the last, upon a country friend he chanced,
A benefactress mild who more than coyly glanced,
E'en succoured soulful Jacques, contriving, could him make
Of joyful blessedness idyllic brief partake;
Convincing him that love can reach a height extreme,
Measureless ecstacy arrive within man's scheme.
'Mongst influences sweet of rustic arboured shade,
Tulips and lilies; walks by rivulet, cascade;
A pleasant farm-house white, red roofed, with shutters green,
And gravelled terraces whence doves and bees were seen;

Journeys where bouldered hills seem a dark rage to
wreak,
Or bluest skies enhance views of a snowy peak,
Delicious days he spent; now toiled, now deeply felt,
With Nature or his love would converse hold, and
melt.

No more a youth, at length from Chambéry set free,
Rousseau in Paris seeks a fuller destiny,
And there exhibits soon in music such a gift
As can procure renown, but poverty not lift.
Hence as a copyist he earns a little bread,
Will not, a pensioned slave, by Louis vile be fed.

Meeting a humble maid of homely, honest face,
He rescues her from woes, and ventures to embrace
One cannot understand his thoughts and dreams and
fears,
Still, stays his faithful mate through tedious struggling
years.
Alas! in misery, to strangers he forsakes
His offspring one by one; an awful deed that makes
Sure mark upon his life.
For, if his brilliant mind
Assures a welcome in society refined,
It checks forgetfulness, and magnifies his guilt,
Which, like a vengeful weapon buried to the hilt,
Torments and punishes and leaves him full resolved,
To save with fine endeavour multitudes involved
In customary woes. Vaunting a paradox,
Saying ways civilised are but as shallows, rocks
Perilous unto good, ere long Jean Jacques withdrew,
In his choice Hermitage could notions high pursue.

But soon, a noble dame (desiring one to know
Whose fame, already great, was likely yet to grow)

Sets, with a subtle spark, his tender soul aflame,
Whereon he grows enraptured, widely would proclaim
A gospel of reform. Limning temptation's might,
Denies he custom's power to guide the heart aright,
And harrows with a tale of early love's despair,
Pleads for a simpler life and parents' sounder care.
Asking the suffrages of those his words should move,
And to deft rhetoric he can a title prove!
He tilts at every phase of fashionable deceit,
Deems nature against art should hopefully compete,
E'en wakes in minds precise which court a stringent rule,
A love of the ideal, founds a romantic school.
Maintaining, e'er a form of Providence must be,
He ruffles such as hold, man is of Heaven free;
But friends show sympathy, would soothe and render calm
A soul so sensitive ever it calls for balm;
Hence, in his forest glade, Jean Jacques becomes more bold,
Thinks it his duty, a new theory to unfold;
Has looked on every side and feels of evils sure,
Thus seeks with argument to introduce a cure;—
Lauding a state of nature, clearly never known,
He says, once perfect man must present ways disown;
For are not human units equal at their birth?
Is not the general State of most surpassing worth?
E'en if a king offend, under the social pact,
He, like a common wight, must suffer for his act:
A notion brave, indeed, in years of royal pride
When monarchs absolute could sentence folk untried!
Worshipping liberty, fantastic rights, for all,
Leant Rousseau not on force, for bloodshed did not call;

Lived yet oblivious that, with heritage complete,
Man may not, through a wish, his settled past defeat,
Cannot with suddenness, from his old chains grown free,
Erect an equal state, o'erturn society.
For torrents swift and deep are hardly turned aside
Whatever be their course, however strange their tide:
Scarce has man compacts made, nor aimed at ways ideal,
But obstacles o'ercome, and shown a timely zeal!
Still, 'twas a dismal hour and Rousseau's words of fire
Aroused a fervid race as might a tocsin dire;
Spake of a gnawing wrong, and set to ponder deep
Those would the common fruits of honest manhood reap.
Too, thinking of the day when he from home was cast
Forlorn into the world, on to life's highway passed;
He called up memories of his unhappy youth,
Felt spurred, for all the weak, to show abounding ruth,
Forth sent in time a tome that with instruction dealt,
Tyranny's wont defied, this valiant message spelt;—
Doth aught exist more choice than the unfolded bloom
May soon become a flower? then keep the child from gloom!
Lavishing sympathy, regard, with glances kind,
The effort to succeed of a bewildered mind!
Strengthen the sinews weak, increase youth's potency
Sound customs to acquire and methods ill to flee;
Whose nature, no-way vile, puts forth its effort brave
Vigorous to advance through life's insistent wave.
All vague and complex creeds to later life belong;
Goad not an infant's mind, delay till he is strong;

Nay, fortify his reason, senses educate,
Till he become prepared to battle with his fate:
Truly the child is not a creature for the rod,
But to be led by kindness, even unto God!
Rousseau to doctrines sharp, prefers a faith scarce strict,
Writhes if ecclesiastics heretics afflict,
Infuriate grows because, for words irreverent,
They torture a poor lad ere to the headsman sent.
Draws he a minister, in a pure mountain home,
That, loving God and man, can far from dogma roam;
Whereon the Church aghast, demands if views more base
Assaulted e'er the weak, who vices oft embrace;
Says, infants are corrupt and marked by sin's sad flaw,
Of supernatural things must hence, forthwith, gain awe;
Surely from earliest years the young should be controlled,
That they may righteousness and higher truth uphold!
Wherefore, the book heroic gives the hangman work,
Whose flame would see to it, error shall nowhere lurk!
And Jean Jacques now in peril, girds him, hastens far
Declaring with his pen 'gainst an archbishop war;
Wandering, suffers much from hatred's vogue unfair,
Returns, alas! again, to days of grievous care;
Late yet to Paris comes, sad lives and, nigh alone,
Nature-adoring still, muses on seed well sown.
Truly, a being strange and common men unlike,
That, from the art of letters could its coldness strike,
Carelessly, when in want, his parenthood conceal,
Long to morality devote incessant zeal;

Oft, from hurt feelings, rage, and yet to friends be true
When pain or nerve-disorder did not him pursue!
What other moralist, despairing, poor and proud,
His every early sin, called posthumous aloud?
Disguised no morbid trait that, cursing his career,
Relentlessly a foe, has made his path severe?
Confessions rarest writ with magic that enchants,
Yet with a boldness that invites to look askance,
As if, despite his faults, feeling most sure of fame,
E'en he could smirch himself and injure his good name?
Or gloomily suspicious, or with joy elate,
Now showing traits divine, and now degenerate;
What was the secret, Rousseau, of thy actions strange,
Of peccancy's and lofty ethic's interchange?
Persistent buffeting of an unstable mind
Impairs a high resolve, devotes it to the wind;
And reason, often-time by feeling being subdued,
Displays inferior force, seems even nigh eschewed;
Thereon the soul, perturbed, desisting from its flight,
Chooses a lower course, shines forth with lesser might.
Oh, victim manifest of an imperfect plan
Necessitating woe and grief for every man;
Analyst unsurpassed, dissector resolute
Of feelings tenderest and every phase acute
Of love's sharp tyranny, e'en the predicament
Of a much-yearning heart by constant anguish rent;
Reformer courage-filled and ethicist humane,
Knowing, as few have known, attention to obtain,
Thou gained'st victories by thy ideals extreme,
And led'st a laggard world of better things to dream!

XII

As, when each leaf is still, and fragile folk complain,
Life is scarce bearable, deep sigh for cooling rain,
Loud crashes forth a far reverberating peal,
And the dark-warring clouds torrentially reveal
Their full-charged potency, soon even natures stern
The flash and roar receive with a dismayed concern,
And softer ones insist;—will the storm never cease,
Till last appears the boon of calm and joyous peace;
So France was fated to pass onward 'midst despair,
Through horrible revolt win an existence fair.

Although man's imperfection a swift march impedes,
Stirred by emotion, some can compass wondrous deeds;
So, despite blemishes in character or mind,
Rousseau a higher path for human beings could find,
Since when he sank in death, a generation rose
That, 'neath his influence, would misery oppose.

In past time Montesquieu, absorbed in social laws,
Zealous implored a Prince from unfair ways to pause,
Who, when he nigh his Court luxurious nobles drew,
Bid them thereby home duties callously eschew.

Sad was a peasant's fate, that toiling on the land,
But bread and salted water's nurture could command,
And for the feudal lord must ancient dues provide,
Ever repair the roads, see game make havoc wide!

Oft sounded then the lash since, found with smuggled salt,
The man, the woman e'en, was punished for such fault
As failing to approach, with a small store of gold,
Belaced officials who the common staple sold.

At boundaries constantly by imposts vile o'erborne,
Small struggling farmers lacked a market for their corn;

And haggard folk despaired, withered before their time;
More, some remained as serfs, knew that to stir was crime;
And none could count on justice, for the lord decreed
Who should maintain the law and its stern measures speed!
Now, at such sorry day, sat on the throne a King
Young, kindly, debonair, could yet himself not bring
To glance at methods new. And, like the lords untaxed,
And a Church dominant that ever richer waxed,
And weak assemblages of legists that did naught,
To lean on such a prince the people had been taught.
Turgot! to save the land, thou hadst desire and wit;
Alas! thy plans displeased some modish favourite!
Necker! thou too must toil, couldst skill and courage claim,
Meaning at least to keep France from the bankrupt's shame,
What hour an idle Court, vain and extravagant,
With an ambitious war increased the nation's want!
But when the foolish King, to harm his British foe,
Had suffered soldiery o'er Ocean waves to go,
They that returned oft dreamed:—at home might flash, again,
Swords in America had lately flashed amain!
Awoke a spirit strange, fawning was unrenewed,
Sounded a stronger voice, changed was men's attitude.
Cursed with a treasury bare, Louis assistance needs,
And with a lowered crest to his good people speeds;
Ah, finds the common folk, on whom the taxes fall,
Ambitious to be heard within the Council hall,

Wishful upon the laws to speak, adjudicate,
Determined never more to quail before the great!
Now, as a goodly youth that stature gains and might,
Desiring due respect, will seek it as a right;
When, after righteous effort, France obtained assent
Of a reluctant King to call a parliament,
The humble Third Estate grew shrill and clamorous,
Separate not from lords and Churchmen, to discuss
Affairs in general, would with subservience break,
Consentingly, no more, a part inferior take.
Denied their special wish in the State-hall to meet,
They valiant toward a spacious tennis-court retreat;
To found a Constitution, no less, solemn swear;
Await upon events, important past compare.
Arouses Louis soon, evinces wrath and scorn,
Hints less activity the Commons should adorn;
Nay, with determined mien, invokes a show of arms;
Almost intimidates, the deputies alarms;
Lastly contemptuous, threatening something worse,
Through a stern emissary directs that all disperse.

XIII

Of ancient southern blood, but lacking high repute,
Rises such moment, one audacious, resolute;
'Tis Mirabeau, intending Royalty to tame
(Had within prison writ a work that brought him fame)
"Withdraw," he calls, "and tell your master, 'tis our will,
The Sovereign People's purpose, naught else, to fulfil."
Whene'er a cause is just, it yields intrinsic force
Opponents to dissuade from choosing a false course;
And, nigh the throne, some fearing national reproof,
From further interference sought to hold aloof;

Wherefore the seigneurs, bishops, with the Commons met,
Agreed to make new laws, their house in order set.
Such hour a minister, in high finance renowned,
Discovered, as appeared, reform's swift method sound;
But privilege complained, hinting at rich men's loss,
And Louis, ill at ease his courtiers' aims to cross,
Rejected him and sighed. Calmly can Paris see
Loss of a trusted friend, who from sad woes should free?
Humbly receive a slight at hands of one inclined,
Through use of alien guards, to compass deeds unkind;
With hated foreigners the land would overawe?
The hour has come at last, to show an angry claw!
So, insurrection's madness seizing on the bold,
Desmoulins, writer skilled of fervour uncontrolled,
A fiery restless scheming agitator proves,
In Palais Royal gardens, patriots' feelings moves.
Soon is cried vehement, "Now every weapon snatch,
Monarchs on force rely, we must their measures match;
The Bastille with eight towers has soldiery but scant,
There strike the premier blow, vile tyranny supplant!"
'Tis true some veterans the battlements defend,
Whose musket shots scarce harmful here and there descend,
But swift a cheering crowd the hateful dungeons sees,
Subdued no more by awe, the hidden captives frees;
At last, disorderly, unto the city hastes,
Feels a strange appetite, delight in bloodshed tastes.
Throughout the days and moments, passions strong gain life,
Afflict the moderate with sense of coming strife.

Then, valiant Mirabeau, who courage joins with mind,
And, dreading anarchy, security would find,
Makes of good citizens a stout and steadfast guard,
Discerns his efforts by no opposition marred.
And, to meet hindrances, he would forthwith create
Some potent instrument, a method adequate;
Yet the Assembly that e'en feudalism destroys
And privilege annuls, distributes no fresh joys;
Informs a doubting audience, surely all are free,
But nothing does to cure the pangs of poverty!
Has shone no magic force with serried wrongs to cope,
Banish misfortune drear and give immediate hope!
So when the populace, awaking from despair,
Announce with raucous shouts, they wish a life more fair,
Affrighted Royalty, dreading rebellion's germ,
Much ponders how supporters may become more firm;
Makes a feast ready for its loyal guards' behoof,
And, at a moment late, offers of favour proof,
By its own presence stirs to thunderous applause,
Ay, views the tricolour yield to the lilies' cause!
An o'erpronounced display that stings the city's ears
And, like the threat of troops, a cause seems for wild fears!

XIV

Sore famine then smote France, and dreamers desperate thought,
If only to the City pomp of State were brought,
The hungry might be fed. Such favour to implore
Departs with fine parade an Amazonian corps,
Whom leader Lafayette, unable to deter
From speeding to Versailles, o'ertakes as they prefer

A prayer to the Assembly, bread be made more cheap,
To Louis, he his Court in Paris soon will keep.
The general and troops lack comfort through the night;
But pity, too, the crowd's most damp and sorry plight,
Deter not rioters from slaying bodyguards,
Wherefore fidelity outrage no more retards.
So miscreants seek the queen, transfix with pikes her couch;
Chaos grows anarchy till the good King can vouch,
Erect before men's gaze, and his brave consort by,
Homeward it pleases him now to accompany
His subjects dutiful, nor longer will he ban
A statement duly drawn anent "The rights of Man."
Thereat the crowd rejoice, by the mild Sovereign march;
But honour with no cries nor glad triumphal arch,
Approach the Tuileries, where in the riding-school
Congregate valiant, hasty mentors of new rule,
Sway constitutional. What alterations great
In statutes were then asked and carried in the State!
As leaps a pendulum, moved from its wonted stride,
Disposed were legists to direct their glances wide;
For energy impinged of forces long held back,
Called on strong eager hearts and urged them to attack.
And there was pressing work, as remedies to find,
Liberty introduce, enchained thought unbind;
And all were well agreed, misery should be less,
At last the hour was come for perfect happiness!
Strove the Assembly thus to give the people might,
Established, organised for every one his right,
Desired to view the growth of force municipal,
In canton, country commune, City-section small;

Foresaw not such a system would beget dispute,
Impair authority, or cause a strait acute.
Too searched the State for gold, in its need passing sore,
Laid a hand eager on the Church's ample store;
Lifted a portion of the groaning peasant's load,
That now no more a tithe upon the priest bestowed:
Dire urgency had brought a drastic action near,
And roused ecclesiastics to a rage austere!
Decreed was it, for e'er, were held such lands in trust
As, erstwhile, pious folk had on God's servants thrust;
Whence countless acres fell at once hypothecate
To any who with wealth would aid a suffering State
Which, signing assignats, promised in time to pay
Kind friends assisting it to breast an evil day.

XV

Now, the Assembly, to shine forth omnipotent,
Was upon gaining power, through revolution, bent;
Admitted not a need of consultative aid
Whereby sagacious choice of measures might be made;
Determined that the Monarch should perform, alone,
The duty of forbidding laws he would not own.
Behold a parliament, e'er eloquent of speech,
Calling a constitution close within its reach;
Zealously celebrating rights of man new found,
Anxious to win all good 'neath Heaven at a bound!
Sweet freedom next desires a sacred festival,
Seeking equality, demands a bond of all:
So Rhone, Montélimart together plight their troth;
Champagne and Dauphiny and Anjou, with an oath,
Cry unity must be, vile feudal wont shall pass,
Hindrances disappear and rule of class o'er class.

Wherefore, men dance for joy and wring each other's hands
In hamlet, town and vale; upon the mountain lands;
And nigh the capital, to hold a proud review,
Come King and patriots swearing allegiance true,
Witness vast multitudes deploy on Mars' fine field
To hear brave pledges given, and view compacts sealed
By Sovereign, Church and nobles and a people free,
A federated folk, a new society!
Clamour so rapturous ne'er mounted to the skies
Nor grander spectacle appealed to glistening eyes!
But ecstasy intense and seemingly divine,
E'en as the glorious sun, must from a height decline;
For distant soldiery, by the new madness caught,
Addressing officers, an o'erdue payment sought;
Disliked that patriots should the light word obey
Of those who governed with a condescending sway.
Which seed of disaffection injured discipline,
Till mutiny made bold its horrid web to spin,
And raged the camp at Nancy, whereunto was lent
The awful curative of blood's arbitrament;
Tales of which discord travelled, aided faction's stress,
Sorely diminishing the nation's happiness.
Now Titan Mirabeau, that had in England dwelt;
Must sigh for governance which permanence there spelt;
Would have king's ministers duly reproaches bear,
And the lord over them seldom his will declare.
Ah, Louis' haughty queen with querulous surprise
In such a plan scarce else than ill could recognise;
While seldom deputies were willing to admire
A chief of whom suspicion never seemed to tire.
But he in anarchy viewed e'en a greater foe
Than in the feudal ways receiving their last blow,

E'er toiled heroical to make the kingdom sound,
And, being pleased the Court a guerdon for him found,
Deep wishing all events ably should be controlled,
Oft begged his King and Queen to follow methods bold;
Would fain perceive a true prosperity restored,
This statesman, orator whom countless folk adored!

XVI

Such hour, when seigneurs few would in the land remain,
And nigh all watched her needs with insolent disdain;
The patriots foresaw Louis himself might flee,
And pondering o'er such chance, surveyed it sullenly.
So the Assembly ruled, did he thus break his trust,
The Monarch from his throne, by his own act, was thrust.
And 'twas advanced, that three should be with might endowed
To deal with fugitives, or wealthy, or the proud
Who, leaving 'gainst the law, a troubled native land,
Should never more their rights as citizens command.
Then an embodiment of earnestness extreme,
In figure small, with face of bigotry supreme,
One had maintained, he scarce of a man's death could think
(Alas! was fated, soon, no-way from blood to shrink)
Cunning, shrewd Robespierre, scenting advantage clear,
Whichever rival chief upon a shoal should steer,
Aroused a keen debate, himself remaining still,
Let Lameth, Mirabeau display their highest skill;
Of whom, as that desired to make his country safe,
So this at every sign of tyranny must chafe.

Fiercely spake Mirabeau, protesting loud with scorn
A theme so pitiful should any mind suborn.
"No oath he e'er had pledged should bind him to a law
Which could a sure escape from anxious men withdraw!
Whate'er of folks' esteem might unto him yet rest
Was founded on his love for liberty, the blest."
Touched were the waverers by such a height attained,
Seemed many staunch adherents to his tenets gained;
Still, peevish malcontents uttered this bitter taunt:—
What more was needed a dictatorship to vaunt?
Thereon he, lion-like, with eyes ablazing, stared,
A furious war against the Jacobins declared;
Indignant, violent, e'en of control bereft,
Cried "Silence there! the thirty voices of the left!"
Too, was obeyed; then turned away, with strength outworn,
Dreaded to sink forthwith by enmity o'erborne.
For Nature now to one the vital spark refused
That often passion's utmost vigour had abused;
Direly tormented him, at last the forfeit called
And left a nation mourning, desolate, appalled.
In fear, the King and Queen lacking a champion new
Who shall replace a friend, although distrusted, true,
Harbour a bold design, the land will now forsake,
Can almost openly their preparations make,
Escape yet undetect, with haste excessive, flee
And speed, for league on league, ere comes discovery.
Haply, a lad observes the form of Louis' face,
Recalls the lineaments on coinage have a place;
Wherefore, without delay, the pair are homeward brought,
Scarce welcomed by a crowd reckoning kings as naught!

Fallen indeed are they who once were absolute,
Destined to see themselves perform a part nigh mute.
Then Paris celebrates with joy the Bastille's fall,
Girding against the throne, can bloodshed new down-call
From soldiers under arms. Still, Louis, the inept,
Tutors himself in time a charter to accept
Which gives him lessened puissance, while, within the reach
Of such as taxes pay, it empire brings to each;
Proving a folk, at once, 'gainst anarchy can strive
And at a safeguard for their liberties arrive.

XVII

Alas! the order sounds for an Assembly new
Which ne'er before has passed law's edicts in review.
Come Louis' friends, with those for kings scant pity feel,
Last, many o'er disposed to search for things ideal,
Striking at governance with as precise an aim
As if 'twere possible perfection to proclaim!
Whose leader Vergniaud, in chaste and classic speech,
Can utter panegyrics, faultlessly impeach!
Too, Brissot e'er reveals with potency of pen,
That Girondins are virtuous, ay, the best of men.
Without, find shelter in an ancient convent's walls,
A club of Jacobins whose name but strife recalls;
'Tis there grim Robespierre, incisive and intense,
Enthralls in the dim hall a teeming audience.
But, where good Cordeliers had stayed their appetite,
Desmoulins stuttering spake, and Danton showed his might,
And, hero of the rabble, Marat shrieking urged,
Society should live of every tyrant purged.

Ah, many a daring leader, e'en as creatures less,
Shall before long succumb to conflict's bitterness;
Fated are Girondins, more fit for peace than war,
To fall the Dantonists and Jacobins before;
Destined such victors breathe, each upon each, to turn,
Ere France, the sore distrest, shall calm through suffering earn;
Nay, in their thousands, soon, folk innocent must die
That Frenchmen may obtain the boon of liberty!

XVIII

But nations seem no more than human units free,
Whose independence is a question of degree;
And German princes, knowing insufficient cause
Why an anointed king should turn from feudal laws
(Whose queen was near to one in Austria did reign)
Aspired to rescue Louis from his grievous pain.
In naught suppressed they, therefore, fugitives who shrill
Against France ever cried, with a revengeful will;
Uttered afar loud threats, that smote the Gallic heart,
Deep moved the patriots would see all traitors smart.
Should not a seigneurage that from its land had fled,
If tardy to return, be sternly punished?
So, Louis, 'spite his wish, compelled is to declare,
No longer, on the frontier, lords shall sheltered dare
Villainy meditate. But Rhineland's princes proud,
Saying such foreign censure cannot be allowed,
Arouse, in eager Paris, martial spirit dire,
E'en as the deputies within their souls desire;
For some deem battles won should the King reinstate,
And some, defeat would found a pure republic great.

War comes, yet never news of victories to sing,
Grievous calamities men's hearts expectant wring,
Hence Gironde ministers, to help the conflict's course,
Summon a thousand score, a strong and likely force.
Stubbornly valorous, the Monarch can resist,
Vetoes at once the plan such levies to enlist,
And sows despondency. Then Frenchmen's ire grows warm,
Massing together, they the weak Assembly storm,
More, to the Palace pass; with jovial gibe, and threat,
Upon the royal head the cap of freedom set!
Augment forthwith, the signs of German enmity,
And spur Parisians on in effort to live free;
Who beg swart Marseillais unto the north to haste
With doughty warriors, from elsewhere, fully taste
The Capital's delights, attend a festival,
When comes the hour the Bastille's capture to recall.
Hence, stalwarts, of a kind to smile at foolish tears,
Are close at hand to act when rise the nation's fears,
Taking a sturdy vow not lightly to succumb,
Let Brunswick's bloody boast of vengeance strike not dumb!
Which levies brought to Paris, furiously oppose
A Monarch they deem mild, supine before their foes,
E'en slay his valiant Swiss, and leave him desolate
To wander friendlessly, last halt incarcerate!
Still, chaos was not yet, for, those who felt the need
A national convention instantly decreed,
Wielding might absolute. Alas! arrives ill-news,
E'en of a frontier fort unable to refuse
Aught that the foe demands. Then Paris, seeming curst,
Trembles to send afar due legions until, first,

Allaying active dread that treachery impends,
It in the City's heart, care to such issue lends.
Meanwhile, La Vendée, true to past and priest and
King,
Into dread civil war hastens itself to fling,
Grievously adding to vexations they must feel
Who venture to direct with ceaseless, vigorous zeal.
Since Danton, never one to flinch in face of pain,
Now dauntlessly endeavours victory to gain,
Though frigid Robespierre perceives a risk in arms,
For his loved revolution dangers and alarms ;
And Marat war pronounces a base, cunning scheme
Meant to suppress the free, make royalists supreme.
Must Danton, huge and rude, a fighter to the core,
Witnessing deadly peril, energy outpour,
Resistance organise. What time the Prussians stept
On sacred Gallic soil, he to his feet swift leapt,
O'erflowing with a stern and massive virile health,
Rich in ability, supplied a needed wealth
Of courage to the faint ; who trembling, grey with fear,
Received salvation from this minister sincere.

XIX

Rises an agency too capable of deeds
Decisive, vile, that usual wickedness exceeds !
Since to the Commune house the City's sections send
Trusty commissioners, who their approval lend
To past attacks on Louis ; seeking great renown,
In conclave show themselves desirous that the Town
Shall vie with France ! small councillors with deputies
That had deposed a King, and passed supreme decrees !
Zealous to drag the nation under monstrous sway,
Permitting interruption, nor by night nor day,

These men profess to deem all just and honest power
Unto themselves reverts, since 'tis a troubled hour!
Usurpers thus appear, deciding questions vast,
Announce that citizens shall rot, in durance cast!
Here gloomy Robespierre utters invectives fierce,
Claims as his special work, conspiracies to pierce,
Yet moves surpassed by one, active and masterful,
Having a venomed edge that ne'er is rendered dull;
For, small and ragged Marat, brazen, nigh insane,
By hatred animate, such hour begins his reign.
Soon prisons overflow with hapless royalists,
Suspected by (as seems, through time's obscuring mists)
Strange Marat and the friends that with him truly swear
And hold it as their right for slaughter to prepare!
To men made ireful by the news of losses vile,
A sudden tale arrives, that prisoners will beguile
And overpower their guards; e'en, rescuing the King,
A terrible disaster on the City bring.
Sudden a cannon booms—the dreaded tocsin sounds!
Infuriates swarm well-armed whose vigour passes bounds,
Upon the captives fall, loving their hideous task,
Care nothing if the great beseechingly dare ask
Compassion for the doomed. And when the deed seems done,
Afresh the torrent flows, dear respite there comes none
Till executioners, at close of awful day,
Sullen receive their dues, while others calmly pay.
Stept forth thus patriots of sanguinary cast,
Who, holding trials brief, to Abbaye dungeons passed,
Insisted myrmidons should wield the pike or sword,
Deliver Paris from pro-Austrians abhorred!

The tidings of which deeds anger all gentle hearts;
Still, danger from abroad nor alters nor departs,
And the storm rages wildly, frees a horrid flood
Of passions devilish, athirst for human blood.
Even, amidst the terror, panic cannot pause
And oft intolerant, scorning accepted laws,
Fancying foes in such as harmlessness display,
Strikes them relentlessly to cure its own dismay!

XX

Soon, in a land afflict by famine's woes acute,
The prim, austere and dismal Robespierre astute
Reveals a fresh design; the deputies attracts,
Cries that a traitor King should answer for his acts.
"For had he not conspired, his duty oft forgot?
At the republic struck, caused many a selfish plot?
Against a story past, futile it seemed to chafe,
But this shone paramount, the country must feel safe.
Their own rebellion proved the Monarch had done wrong;
Nor should they set him free because he late was strong;
One had begotten war, at hideous acts connived,
Of his life dangerous should surely be deprived!"
The Commune never pauses, cannon sends and men
Who lead the lofty great out to the public ken;
Forth from the Temple donjon's cold and steely clasp,
That less confined, and yet, in an insistent grasp,
Listening to every charge, he at the bar may plead
Of an Assembly which his words will closely heed.
It is unfair, calls one, they should the issue try
That, e'er inimical, accuse the monarchy;

But he finds favour not, and endless words are said
Through tedious days and nights, interminable spread.
So comes it, Vergniaud, who mercy would exalt,
Deems all the nation should decide on Louis' fault;
St. Just tells how the King his country would o'erthrow,
Using or soldiery or a vile foreign foe;
And Barère's supple brain, teeming with reasons sound,
Assists the hesitant to take a firmer ground;
Wherefore, all unperturbed though royal blood be spilt,
The voices, well-nigh each, solemn pronounce for guilt.
Exile—a dungeon—death? Which shall be Louis' fate?
Again men set to work, afresh deliberate,
In turn the tribune mount to register their view,
While plaudits, or loud groans, from galleries ensue
And prove the rabble's trend. And some display a need
For courage, many waver, late the worst concede.
The day gives way to gloom, then darkness unto light,
And still the president must deputies invite
To tell in turn their will. Whereon, comes weariness,
Although spectators gay the spectacle can bless;
Since, as the harsher vote transcends the one more mild,
The patriot women listen, truly reconciled
To their long vigil strange; and high bedizened dames,
Sipping their cup, prick cards to mark how fortune aims.

Without, fills wagering near taverns to the brim,
The Sovereign's affairs make every other's dim.
'Tis shouted, Robespierre, ruthless but eloquent,
Sees but a cruel means, liberty to cement;
And last, 'midst stillness sharp, president Vergniaud tells
The sentence terrible that e'en a sob compels:
To Louis Capet, death!
One the strange news receives
Steadfast and manfully, while yet in awe he grieves;
To whom, alas! remains but a short interval
Of agitated life, for morning brings his call,
When wait the gendarmes stern, and a good abbé next,
Until their King steps forth before a guard perplext
By a task critical.
Listens, serene and brave,
The Monarch to the priestly exhortations grave,
And hears, perforce, the strenuous drummers at the head
Of that armed host 'midst which his carriage safe is led.
Around rules discipline! no prying eye must view
Nor sympathy disturb the course of justice true!
Drear seems the outer air, and thick, and moist and chill,
But 'tis in harmony with a soul harassed, ill,
That, 'neath its crushing burden, ceases not to think
Of a past life with which there soon will rest no link.
He mourns the children dear he never can see more,
The wife for whom, perchance, sad woe remains in store;

Recalls his happy hours of hunting until eve,
Or making keys and clocks should a mild fame achieve,
Must sigh that fate e'er chose him ruler of a land
Torn by a turbulence he cannot understand;
Asks himself, has he sought to lift his people's cares,
And God again implores to hear his solemn prayers.
If, simple, stolid King! thou suffered'st not as much
As one of quicker sort might 'mid disasters such;
Still, from an altitude, what steep descent was thine!
Scarcely could be more strange and terrible decline!
If in thy breast, being thus to destiny sad brought,
Thou harboured'st, bewildered, an indignant thought;
Well satisfied thyself as just and good to count,
Assured that in thee lay the highest earthly fount
And source of worthiness, thou couldst not willing bear
The last indignity! yet, to submit didst care,
Recking not some might view thy lineaments held high,
Enemies in thy blood their kerchiefs deeply dye!

XXI

Then, by such royal death the battle gage being thrown,
Swift, foreign rulers cry, these upstarts shall atone!
English and Germans, Dutch and Spaniards sure combine
On Alps and Pyrenees, the Meuse, Moselle and Rhine,
Encounter valiant levies, proof that France can act,
Despite she is at once by all the world attacked.
For Danton is at hand to stimulate, advise,
Stir with tones passionate and soul-awaking cries!
With consequence supreme and effort marvellous,
Speaks earnestly and loud, the people's tribune thus;—

"Send forth from every section now, with utmost speed,
Envoys throughout the land to tell the nation's need!
One thought controls my being, how to defeat the foe;
France shall win liberty though shame remain my woe;
Let only justice strike the traitors near at hand,
Triumphs will compensate the losses of our land!
If single aims and faith but patriots unite,
Troubles and misery will vanish from our sight.
In the dread tocsin note that warns you of attack,
Hear, too, the bugle call hurling the foeman back!
Courage will conquer him; mere for success, have graved
Valour upon your hearts and, then, our land is saved!"

Yet, first, the Gallic youths, undisciplined for war,
Scarcely as veterans beyond reproof them bore;
Next, with a spirit born of natures proud and strong,
Could zealously advance, ever for battle long,
True victories secure under Dumouriez keen,
A chief for monarchy o'er-ripe to intervene.

Now hazards of the strife evoked dire discontent
Because the troops, ill armed, scant clad to battle went;
And their commander sighed, doubted and nigh despaired,
Despite Assemblymen his cause to champion cared,
A process fraught with woe, since he a traitor proved
And made them also seem as if by baseness moved.

XXII

Oft, earnest deputies, foresaw a gloomy fate,
O'er-ready were to blame, distort, recriminate;
For gentleness departs when anxious minds contend,
Then, few remain too great a venomed shaft to send,
And those who sadly feel the pangs of anguish sore,
Resolute grow and fixed, others shall suffer more.
Such hour no argument can well men's ire assuage,
And passions, or in secret or in public, rage.
Always, from when the nations unto war were moved,
Extremists, or the Mountain, on the left, had proved
Their energy supreme; surpassed the Gironde tame
Who chiefly, skilful could 'gainst treachery exclaim.
And, thus aspersed, must Danton, battler ever staunch,
Avow he would destruction on the Gironde launch,
Suggest, they merely sought to grant the people power;
While he would compass more, resist and never cower;
The Prussians overcome, mete unto Austrians blows,
E'er aim but deeds of highest moment to propose.
Ere long, the strenuous and strongest in the State,
Determine their own schemes alone shall carry weight!
Their Revolutionary Tribunal wrath must wreak,
Control folk ill-disposed, the lax and sly outseek,
Call judge and jurymen, and one of small repute,
Dark, savage Fouquier-Tinville swift to prosecute.
Alas! a plan designed sound interests to advance,
E'en from the narrow paths of righteousness can glance,
And such as have gone forth in quest of liberty,
May come at last on wont despotic to rely!

When, in a hideous hour, Dumouriez, once their hope,
Had proved him but a foe; brave Frenchmen sought to cope
With ills accumulate, displayed themselves as stern
Untiring combatants who for the conflict burn.
As, long past, deputies, by chaos' thought appalled,
Had for security, Committees strong installed;
To-day, oppressed by fearful perils of the State,
They wished, for public safety, something to create;
And Danton, ever bold, a council fresh would choose
That must not in the strife, through lack of vigour, lose.
Forth gleaming absolute all projects to design,
Ne'er throve a more compact and shrewdly direful Nine!
For Billaud grim and Collot worshipped horrid force,
And Carnot ready made for war with vast resource;
And Barère handled words could e'en opponents lure;
And Robespierre's cold logic gave conviction sure;
While shrieking, crippled Couthon to the phalanx came,
And virtuous St. Just, who must the calm inflame.
Uprose this body, now, to show a mind compact,
Breed energy sublime throughout a land attacked;
Threat the recalcitrant presuming to rebel,
Convey to enemies, it could hard vengeance spell;
Hurl proclamations far, harsh edicts promulgate,
Armies afield inspect and all things dominate!
Still, Marat, more than others, proved his bitterness
Toward all that would not swift be driven to excess;
Loudly with virulence the Girondins accused
And at their measures railed, because half-hearted, used.

Him to o'erthrow, these foes to the Tribunal took,
But ineffectually, so their importance shook,
And made municipals athirst to strike them down
Who on a favourite so seriously could frown;
Wherefore, brave Girondins, with soul and conscience clear,
Meted retaliation, penalties severe.

XXIII

How, urged by eagerness to bring about reform,
Men often reckless bore them in that fearful storm;
Used the skilled rhetoric of polished letters pure,
Or a coarse pandering, their wishes to secure;
Would stoop to make good acts seem treachery the worst,
Denounce small errors as supremely to be curst!
Desmoulins! with what venom didst thou sharp pursue
The Girondins that wrought according to their view!
Brissot had lectured thee, and thou to make return,
Said'st, if occasion came, his soul should likewise burn!
Had he not dared ascribe disasters of the State
To thy good Jacobins, honour's ensamples great?
Camille! didst thou not stooping, reason as required,
Delivering attacks by Robespierre inspired?
Didst not view party-foes as criminals arraigned?
And measure actions old by standards late attained?
Yet claim thy evidence should not be judged o'erstrict;
For it would save a land by evil persons tricked!
'Twas clear, when Brissot aimed colonial slaves to free,
He only thought of vile British supremacy!
And a base hope beset drear Pétion's shallow brain:
Who schemed in secrecy, Britain o'er France might reign!

So craftily didst thou, Camille! suspicion breed,
Men's doubts grew certainties, because they gave thee heed!

XXIV

Joins Hébert turbulent with foaming Marat now,
And both, haranguing loudly, common hate avow,
With regiments march to gain the weak Convention's ear;
But thwarted, swiftly threaten, call the cannoneer;
Whence the mild Girondins are placed beneath arrest,
And deputies dragooned fall low, of power divest.
Yet force can answer force when folk excited strive,
Feeling intense shall e'en to savage action drive;
Thus one had constant aimed to live "the people's friend,"
And in prints violent the moderate would bend
To his will paramount (himself had suffered blows,
Therefore was tempted more all mildness to oppose)
Marat, the crowd's elect, a-sudden met his doom,
Escaped his settled lot of dark suspicious gloom.
For when the Girondin deputies twenty-two
Of freedom were bereft; such hour escaped a few,
Of whom one, nearing Caen, the town of ancient spires,
Awoke in maid Corday incessant wild desires
And sighs for Marat's blood. Snatching a little knife,
She tracks the demagogue, unto his furious life
Calm sets a fearful end, can with her own dispense,
Happy her sacrifice has sent a madman hence.
O'erwhelmingly disasters threaten now the land
While doughty Paris must persistent foes withstand;
And yet the valiant ones who governance controlled
Dared model juster laws, a constitution mould;

Designed and well installed a democratic sway,
Proclaimed equality a virtue of the day.
Such franchise to receive, travel, from townships far,
Due representatives, who stirred by needs of war,
Maintain that every man, whate'er his lot, should strive
To free his country and the foreign foe forth drive.
Nor only Danton breathes by lofty notions fired,
The poet Barère soars, even as much inspired,
Discharges winged words affecting brain and heart,
Telling how all can play at once a worthy part.
If old, men could incite; if young, strife's hardships share;
Women must tents provide, e'en children lint prepare;
The horses lived for troops, should wagons, cannon draw;
Each form of wealth forthwith was subject to this law;—
It was subordinate, ever, without excuse,
Unto a struggling country's military use.
Still, anger always lived for Marat unforgot,
Whose fate and teaching kept the lust of vengeance hot,
Shrieked that a Queen, once gay, now sadly changed and wise,
Must come within the range of coarse unkindly eyes;
Standing in loneliness, be told her past offence,
Even of sins might ask a tragic consequence.
Smiling, when Hébert brings against her charges base,
She listens scornfully, lifts an unruffled face,
Soon finds her judges by grim enmity are stirred,
Discuss her destiny as if she were unheard,
Can send the widow Capet on that dreadful way
Deemed by the Terror best anxiety to stay.

Poor Queen! the calls of State were more than thou
couldst bear
When it had vastly taxed a sage the crown to wear!

XXV

How goes it with the Gironde, of the mood sublime,
Masters of factiousness but innocent of crime?
Pent in their prison-chapel, bare and gloomy walled,
They strenuous fill the moments till to judgment
called,
Exhibit eloquence and humour merrily,
Mimic with vividness the trial as 'twill be!
Ah, when it comes to Tinville's province to denounce,
Tiger-like he can spring, upon such victims pounce;
Whose spokesmen tremble not, long valiantly defend,
Whence the Convention must the trial quickly end.
Unmoved the captives hear the specious verdict read,
Ascend the tumbrils calmly, with drear death to wed;
And brave comporting them with eyes nor sad nor dim,
Make ring the Marseillaise, martial soul-stirring hymn;
Leave Earth, then one by one, a goodly score and twain,
While Vergniaud falters not, the last among the slain.
Next, Madame Roland dies, she of the virile thought,
Who, with her salon's help, unto the Gironde brought
High place political; late, from her lonely cell,
Divulged truths intimate as few have dared to tell;
Lastly, with soul aflame, about the world to flee,
Cried, "They, O Liberty! have mocked at, played with
thee!"

XXVI

Proceed good citizens impassive on their way,
Bend to their usual tasks, or flaunt a spirit gay,

Hasten to ball or opera, mind 'gainst mind sharp pit,
Discern in dark events even a cause for wit ;
Welcoming toys or fashions that of death light speak,
In lieu of gloom and sadness, jollity e'er seek.
Such hour, adherents to the cult of human might,
Trusting nor providence nor any heavenly light,
Tearing from sacred fanes their gorgeous panoply,
Endeavour Reason shall be man's divinity.
A damsel beautiful, willing to fill the part,
In Notre Dame adorns an altar new to art,
While e'en a holy bishop shows his favour strange,
And revels mark, without, how some regard the change.
Anxious to view mankind reformed, regenerate,
Preaching the valiant creed, 'tis just to educate,
One Chaumette, that had taste for socialistic dreams
And loved to dwell upon ameliorating schemes,
Assisted great Condorcet, sage would swift obtain
A happy human mood when darkness will not reign.
For, as a swarm of ants wide labours shall divide,
Now store their needed food, now captives' fate decide ;
So, in those startling days, men toiled in progress' cause,
Aiding in many ways, designed more perfect laws ;
Even for weights and measures a new plan upreared
While clanged the horrid knife which heads from shoulders sheared :
Doubtless our thought misjudges oft that epoch keen,
Well the Convention wrought amidst the woeful scene !

XXVII

And yet, if some engage in effort against ills,
Display a zeal the law of sympathy fulfils,

And many jovial live, or careless, though not all,
A leader sore repenting, would the past recall.
To Danton the warm-hearted, dearly loved of friends,
Arrives ere long remorse, and it his heart nigh rends.
Soon ran the Seine as blood to one the lost must save,
But first, being ill and weak, unto himself rest gave.
To Arcis journeying, his far ancestral home,
By the small sluggish Aube, he lingering liked to roam;
Awhile reviewed his thoughts, or peaceful planted trees,
Tended a little garden open to the breeze.
Sped he then Paris-ward, to close the hideous strife,
If 'twas the only way, would value not his life.
In the Convention, speaking of sweet gentleness,
And rousing wrath severe of such as on would press
With horrid lust for blood, he touched a single string,
And pled until he heard indignant voices ring;
Gained but the smallest help from Robespierre, the saint,
And last, must strive to clear his own good name from taint;—
"Why such hostility? Guiltless of any crime,
Men's friend he breathed, as ever through the previous time;
But he loved liberty, hated inordinate
Dire measures of control, deemed that no more the State
(Since now the hour was come for amnesty's kind scheme)
Should preach intolerance or practise deeds extreme.
As for himself, he loathed slyness and acts of stealth,
Dared enemies to prove he had acquired wealth

Through methods strange or base. Intimidation's claw
Should leave no sign on him, his soul not overawe ;
Better to leave the world than, taking lives, e'er dye
One's heart and conscience with a reckless infamy ! "
Ah, won the orator a triumph once again,
Although as he foresaw, his influence could wane ;
More, urgency arose, assistance strong was due,
The which appeared, forthwith, through a fresh avenue.
By oft-viewed misery, sobs, wails incessant heard,
Desmoulins' tender soul was violently stirred,
Torn by a drear remembrance that his pen had striven
To slay his enemies, nor ever one forgiven !
Now panting to support Danton his comrade, chief,
Find comfort for the suffering, in their present grief,
He struck at tyranny, as it all France oppressed,
And drew symbolically a picture of the pest
Terror had proved, such time as vicious Nero ruled,
By whom, for trivial flaws, the good with death were schooled !
Desmoulins would disperse, or see by mildness led,
The o'er-despotic curst Safety-Committee dread !
But Hébert ! king uncrowned of the strong Commune fierce,
Cries, " Let our force its way to the Convention pierce,
Subdue it, then set forth and fearless seek our prey,
March with the guillotine at no time far away ! "
Yielded Desmoulins no-way, ceded not an inch,
Argued for clemency, was seen by none to flinch ;
Still asked for liberty, and strove with glorious strength
For reason's sway, just treatment, happiness at length ;
Nor faltering shrank, and e'en assumed to see but jest,
When warned he might incur death's penalty and test.

"Speed to the gate," he called, "and peremptory direct
To liberate the host of prisoners suspect :
Were to the scaffold led the hostile, one by one,
Still would arise fresh foes, a task be left undone ! "

XXVIII

Dire the Committee's most insistent champions raged,
Devised a double project, which their wrath assuaged.
First, Hébert and his band of anarchists intent,
Being seized by soldiery, to the Tribunal sent,
Were charged with many sins, to hasty death dispatched,
From harmful influence and interference snatched.
Then, to complete the scheme, a second part remained,
Danton should be destroyed, all softness so restrained.
And he, great demagogue, bereft of fear and gloom,
Knowing his hour was come, avoided not his doom !
But to assist him one in the Convention dared,
And was by Robespierre on such account not spared,
Who scarce could generous hear a rival well reviewed,
And venomously thus, the zealous friend, pursued :—
" Upon thy face is stamped the hideous mark of crime,
Thy brazen countenance shows impudence sublime !
Thou with duplicity no more mankind shalt snare,
Ne'er calm has marked thy worthless soul which I lay bare.
Calmness ! yet stay ; 'tis that the worst of folk desire
When they would play the saint and villainous conspire.
What ! wouldst thou justify a man the people hate ?
Encourage vicious knaves with hideous plots elate ?

'Tis dolts doubt infamy: war's carnage is the sign
That, for their own advantage, traitors scheme and mine.
Thought other to support were surely to deny
Justice its due, and charge the good with calumny!"
So foes at Danton hurl full many a poisoned shaft,
Use each resource and trick of rhetoricians' craft,
Show themselves doubly base to all impartial eyes,
Since, but a while ago, they praised him to the skies!
He, in his absence, is outrageously accused,
In effigy condemned, denounced, and e'er abused;
His confidences soft of friendship are laid bare,
Imaginary crimes detailed with surest air.
Had the attainted not relieved some widows poor
And the republic's foes in such way made secure?
Had he not wished to spare the royal traitor's head,
E'en for him, later on, some tears unholy shed?
Had he not shown delight in stories light of tone,
The Prussians saved, and raised many a guilty loan?
Wherefore, he speeds to trial, with him Camille takes,
Whose agitated heart, astounded, wellnigh breaks;
Since death's appalling thought in natures sensitive
Can breed a sentiment o'erpowering to live.
Affection for the home may rack a human soul
Which sees its happiness slipping beyond control;
And faculties high wrought, if put to sudden stress,
Will oft dispose the strong to sign of feebleness.
So Camille fights the notion, for it seems absurd,
That one 'gainst autocrats had said the earliest word,
Should suffer, e'en with others; strives to burst his bonds;
But Danton soothes his friend, recoils not nor desponds,

Aloft, with boastful port, predicts the tyrant's fall,
Speaks of State griefs to come from woes political;
Charges the headsman to uplift dead Danton's face,
Foams, since he may not meet his comrade in embrace;
Surveys, unmoved, the blade destroying life's strange spark,
And sighing, cries at last, "Now all indeed is dark!
No more to see my wife! Yet stay, no weakness show,
Danton! thy name will ne'er from mortal memory go!"

XXIX

Next, Robespierre revealed traits hid and unsuspect,
A reverential nature long was undetect:
E'en at a solemn fête, worshipped the Being Supreme
In manner bodying forth a wild fantastic dream;
For he raised effigies should vices reprobate,
Or honour virtues and men's morals new create.
Alas! the virtues flamed through the wind's vengeful breath,
Whereas the vices, fired, refused to suffer death!
Ere long a crazy dame cries, Robespierre is God,
Whereon, jeer enemies, and smite as with a rod.
Then he, ne'er made to rule, but skilled to slay his foes,
Succeeding not a true influence to impose,
And finding 'spite all care, his adversaries stay free,
Enacts a monstrous law, the Prairial decree,
Which nullifies defence for any prisoner's use
And makes the bloody stream more ghastly and profuse;
Since terror, it was held, to strike opponents down,
Should, ever growing worse, the previous terrors crown!

And Robespierre, become the Revolution's chief,
Long ponders how to bring his enemies to grief,
Such as decemvirs zealous to dispute his power!
Scheming whose fall he spends many an anxious hour,
In solitary paths and Nature's company,
And far away from her he hopes his wife will be;
There finally prepares, with chosen words exact,
Odium to generate and subtly deal with fact.
In the Convention Hall, mounting the tribune high,
Lucid and tense yet calm, thus tells he some must die;—
"Against him had been levied charges false and base
Who surely had increased the Revolution's pace;
Spurned he the calumnies were harsh and never still;
Had any better done that sought his post to fill?
He goodness loved and truth! his foes e'er specious wrong!
And with a tender conscience, how could he belong
To a band traitorous: unmoved allow that such
As nourished little souls his crystal fame should touch?
Often he feared his name must suffer in repute,
If the debased so dared his presence to pollute!
Tyrant to be entitled—he that death would choose
Sooner than possibly the love of patriots lose!
But, with no outstretched hand would he distribute blame,
Swiftly enough the culprits should feel worse than shame!
More, they might reach the scaffold through their wicked crime,
While he remained to live for virtue the sublime!"
A silence as of death—and then, it is agreed,
The speech is worthy print, since some may like to read.

Forthwith, the orator would add to his success,
Exhibits a strange yearning further to progress,
Demands, through friend St. Just, his words be scattered far,
Reach unto every man; and so pronounces war!
Scarcely the sides can breathe, whence each its force withdraws;
Though, when the morning comes, the battle knows no pause.
Billaud and Collot now, with vigorous allies,
(For factions oft unite in face of enemies)
In common concert drown the tyrant schemer's voice,
O'erbear with clamour and expressions seldom choice.
Thereon, by fury crushed, despite the valiant aid
Of weak ones, like himself, no-way for turmoil made,
Exhausted he sinks down. "Arrest him!" one dares cry
That would destroy the quarry long had flown so high;
And, urged by pent-up terror, others swift support,
As would a hurricane, annihilate retort.
To duress soon the fallen demigod is sped,
Then freed by partisans, again to prison led;
In the Hôtel de Ville feels agonised suspense,
Since favouring forces gather, meditate defence,
But rain-soaked, homeward pass. Now Barras, resolute
Champion Conventional, remarking all is mute,
Chooses a trusty band; mounts to an upper floor,
Seizes the fugitive who silent lies in gore
And, from his friends apart, upon a table prone,
Nurses a shattered jaw, lets 'scape a little moan;
An outlaw, next, within the tumbril takes his stand,
Dying in gloom and hate, relieves a stricken land.

As theologians, long, using a hideous right
To save the lost, around them faggots would ignite;
So honest Robespierre, austere fanatic thrall,
Wished, through the flow of blood, strange doctrines to instal,
Let nothing touch his heart, spoke frequently of God,
Despaired not of success, callous the shambles trod!
Then in the capital, with ceaseless efforts throve
'Neath the Convention's sway, such democrats as strove,
Urging a desperate war against Vendeans stern,
Who, loving priest and king, must a republic spurn.
But fervent deputies, encroaching, dared affect
The people's privilege their tribunes to elect;
Wherefore, a threatening scene of violence arose,
So that a chieftain new his nature could disclose.

XXX

To plan, without a qualm, a sanguinary defeat
Of citizens advancing careless through the street;
Nor entertain a thought but how to overcome,
March toward each vantage post, let sound no trumpet, drum;
The headstrong purposes of wrathful patriots change
By cannon exercised at near and deadly range;
Seemed unto Bonaparte a trifle, fairly asked,
Who proved himself, though youthful, no-way overtasked,
Ever fresh admiration from his country drew
As she acquired renown, prosperity anew.
From lonely rugged shore to barren island grave,
Over a continent, through hearts of a folk brave,

Flashed dire Napoleon. What figure of all time
Shines forth so terrible, yet deviously sublime?
This Corsican was cast, for sure, in a rare mould
Who, at an early siege, to please a friend as cold
As could himself appear, lightheartedly e'en fired
Death-dealing cannon balls; a hideous scene inspired!
Advancing, soon he grew a favourite to stand,
And, irresistibly, held France within his hand;
That brought him adoration touching and profound,
Her little corporal, at last, saw Emperor crowned!
And men and women both deemed martial glory more
Than aught else upon earth. They wished but fame through war!
Marches incredible! charges the foe to meet!
A dexterous strategy! well warded off defeat!
Deeds that sharp tingling in the brain, the weak innerved,
Made death a very prize, if Bonaparte were served!
Who struck fair Italy, then Egypt, Syria fast;
Prussia, through Jena, dumb; Austria, at Ulm, aghast;
All generous became, his chiefs to duchies led,
To thrones in Holland, Spain, his loyal brothers sped.
Drafts he a code of laws, a compact with the Church;
Holds courts magnificent and for an heir would search.
Although his wife implores, her argument is vain,
An Emperor such as he ambition's cup must drain;
No natural sympathy shall dull affairs of State,
He will judiciously, with a proud Austrian, mate.
Yet genius great in conflict can o'ershoot the mark,
Cause Russian snows to grow with Gallic bloodstains dark!
Could Moscow's fires arouse a pang in that drear breast?
Nay, nor the innocent, desolate, seeking rest!

Did Borodino's field, or Beresina's stream,
Acres becrimsoned or waves man-engulfing gleam
In the strange mind of one who hastened in retreat;
Warn him, oft-tempted fate will every gambler cheat?
Did awful Leipsic teach? From Elba thundered, No:
Grim battle's devotee to Belgium's plains must go,
Forthwith the Englishman, amid his stubborn squares,
Prove to the uttermost. So then Napoleon dares;
Last falls to outraged earth, shattered and furious lies,
A vanquished conqueror and slave of glory dies.
And what were kings to Paris? but unskilful, vain
Aspirants after greatness none could now attain!
The citizens ne'er ceased their idol to adore,
Remembering all, and sighing, from a far-off shore
Rescued his sacred ashes, brought them o'er the foam
Unto fresh sepulture beneath a mighty dome.
Men even hoped his genius would in kindred shine,
Sought unsuccessfully the traits that seemed divine,
And when disaster proved immoderately they erred,
Choosing a Commonwealth, no more from such they stirred.

XXXI

Far had the people passed, through energy supreme,
Since beautiful Du Barry glowed a common theme!
'Midst widespread misery, sage Montesquieu well writ
Tracing each social law, for human benefit;
And, when a bigot Church would heretics down-strike,
Grim Voltaire scolded till she grew less Christ unlike.
Callously proud, the State at welfare wide dared laugh,
So Turgot bravely schemed and wrought in man's behalf;

Before an absolute, mere subjects were as naught,
Till Rousseau eloquent a juster notion taught;
Too, ignorance was rife, augmented every ill,
Then thundered Diderot and knowledge could instil.
At length, birth insolent, faith, privilege and power
Received a bloody check in Revolution's hour;
When disappeared for ever laws most vilely hard,
Dire wont, the relics stern of feudalism ill-starred.
'Twas said, as waned the special vantage of the few,
All would enjoy their lives and progress make anew;
And there was spread abroad the notion of relief,
Aiming to rescue men from misery's worst grief.

XXXII

But other help arrived; a valour fresh was felt
As grew acquaintance with the nature in man dwelt.
Buffon, the eloquent, had scattered fruitful seed,
With glowing words would love of Nature round him breed;
Toil-loving Cuvier close each animal compared,
A purpose general within their parts declared;
And Bichat, probing organs of the living frame,
Discovered inner tissues oft-time are the same.
At last man's constitution, thus, became more clear,
Revealed itself to sages that for truth must peer;
As Broca, eager student of the human brain,
Who shone 'mongst many to man's history would attain;
And shrewd De Perthes that loosened gravels, river ground,
Of man's antiquity a proof in caverns found;

E'en viewed flint tools beside the bones of beasts extinct!
Scanning a fossil jaw, the past and present linked!
To what a brave advance in science man had stept;
Learning his origin, e'er long how greatly leapt!

XXXIII

For where once savages on a Parisian shore
Rudely disported them in dim weird days of yore,
A love of progress rules. Swiftness in dazzling light
Replaces hesitation 'midst the gloom of night;
And move a people eager for the things of mind,
Ever susceptible to beauty's joys refined,
Making the most of life, by sensuous music caught,
Accepting new ideas and prizing lucid thought,
Acknowledging who strive, through science, letters, art,
To sate the intellect, soothe and delight the heart.
Rebellious in his soul against strict classic wont,
Romantic Hugo long from a poetic font
That bubbled valiantly, forth poured a generous stream,
Made legends of the ages, last, his settled theme.
More, in the land where rapt De Musset suffered woes,
And haunting Rachel all surpassed in tragic throes,
Ably contended, in the praise of logic sense,
Zealous explorers of each cause and consequence.
Thus weighed Sainte Beuve the worth of authors great and less,
From many points endeavoured merits to assess;
And Renan spake of Christ with sentiment profound,
Withheld from things divine no ray of reason sound;
De Balzac, caring types of every sort to paint,
Threw on his mighty page voluptuary and saint;

While Comte, recognisant of all e'er nobly breathed,
In a new ritual humanity enwreathed.

XXXIV

Fair City! in a whirl of full life vigorous,
Thrilled now with fortune blest and now calamitous!
A maelstrom of emotions in thy bosom tells
Of ceaseless force that man's activities compels,
Stirs a vast multitude unsung, unknown to fame,
Who yet a sympathy for higher things can claim!
Ay, man has wondrous soared beside Lutetia's isles
Since there of old he practised humble fishers' wiles!
Singers and players, sculptors, orators have striven;
Painters, philosophers their messages oft given;
In lieu of boorishness, sway graces manifold,
Religion's cult succeeds to move the gentle-souled;
Dulness inert has yielded, glamour rich is felt,
Humanity develops as the moments melt.
Thus, Paris surely knows superior happiness,
Can freedom, brotherhood, equality profess,
Bears testimony clear of man's surprising might
To conquer obstacles and enter into light;
Deserving, will obtain continuous renown,
Nor any circumstance shall snatch her ancient crown!

THE NATURE OF MAN

AMBITION

Athirst for fame, or swayed by discontent,
He that will scarce a common furrow plough,
But dreams of wealth, seeks laurels o'er his brow;
In something weak, discerns with small lament
A horrid demon in his bosom pent
That ne'er, come good or ill, doth rest allow,
Rather with strength for fresh advance endow,
Preaching a tireless gospel of ascent.
And yet, of valiant yearning e'er deprived,
Alas! mankind had trod the earth forlorn,
Breathing of true and eager wishes shorn,
At knowledge, splendour never had arrived!
Scarcely to soar victoriously contrived
If all could love the customary, outworn!

THE NATURE OF MAN

I

Still list! for valiant numbers void of passion's throes
And aiming verities essential to disclose,
Hazarding arguments easy to understand
Anent man's moods and nature, notice would command.
What is he that has triumphed o'er a startled Earth
Which knew inferior life vast Ages ere his birth,
Patiently sees him come to spin and weave and plot,
Struggle for mastery and disappear forgot?
Loving variety, prone sameness e'er to ban,
Nature the complicate is forced anew to plan,
Whence types of humankind nigh far apart prevail,
As even poplars, pines, gnarled oaks and willows frail.
Yet as no tree but shades, heavenward lifts its head,
Acknowledges the storm, on bounteous soil is fed;
As every stem has roots, branches and bark and leaves,
And channels for the sap wherewith it life receives,
So attributes of man unaltered hold their place;
While over all a structure towers throughout his race,

To which all lesser parts are subject, as appears,
They were, among our sires, through myriads of years.
Behold, research proclaims, man's brain incessant sends
Zealously its commands and seeks important ends.
Sharp eyes and ears, deft hands are sentinels or slaves
That strive incessantly : none negligent behaves.
So toil the numerous nerves each different part between,
And ever active organs, silent and unseen,
Or regulate the warmth or touch the inner mood,
Make and control the blood, deal sagely with the food.
Early the mind is slowly built up, without pause ;
No feeling or idea but has organic cause.
Be sure conditions rise, afar or near at hand,
Aiding the brain e'en notions abstract to command ;
Thus heavings of the breast in breathing e'er recur,
So nerve-cells from the thought of time could scarcely err ;
Nor could they well escape pristine ideas of space,
For footsteps, sense-directed, lead from place to place.
With special forms of good, the child soon grows impressed,
Since all love benefits, warmth, nourishment and rest ;
While, as the mind enjoys associative powers,
In it the notion of a general goodness flowers.
Too, the sense-centres fine, if freed from atoms' war,
When helped by harmony, to beauty's thought could soar,

And man's intelligence, as eras sped, became
More gifted and refined, advanced in hopes and aim.
As time once on the supernatural was spent,
E'en matter now is probed with method diligent.
Of strange complexity, and, late, more understood,
Brain, the nerve-citadel, takes note of ill and good;
And ever, as from birth, is furnished with a store
Of hidden tendencies, weirdest ancestral lore,
So recks spontaneously of habits, traits well past,
But mindful is of needs, where'er its lot is cast.
Thus, in the mind of man, it comes from hour to hour,
That leanings old unite with younger ones to flower,
And oft recurs behaviour showing bent and tone
Whereunto ancestors became through custom prone.
Now, should the eyes or ears or fingers, from without,
A stimulus receive, the nerves from such a scout
Take swift the message to the brain or spine's thin cord,
Since fine vibrations speeding, like an active horde,
Deliver soon the news, its force communicate,
Within a special spot arouse commotion great.
Join then, in common toil, a host of tiny cells
And each, such time, betrays the nature in it dwells;
Wherefore effects occur, responses haste as swift
As was the recent call, and stir the muscles, shift
Into a fresh position eyes, lips, hands or limbs;
Prove even outwardly the force of traits or whims.
After a loved one's voice the air in tremor cast,
Hearing-cells can repeat their excitation past;
And delicate touch-centres shall confer a kiss,
Fainter than that aroused, perchance, ecstatic bliss;

And vision-zones vibrate as if the sunlight's rays,
From lineaments reflected, soothed the lover's gaze.
Unceasingly persist within an active brain
Potencies wont to call the past to life again;
And these with strange distortion in a mind oppressed,
May, through unwelcome visions, militate 'gainst rest,
With curious words conspire to persecute the ear,
Reveal a cause for gloom, turn happiness to fear.
But healthy nervous-centres, from experience true,
As with an artist's skill, can form an image new;
Unfaltering in judgment, recognise, perceive,
What is the value of the fancies they light weave;
Ah, fearful peril threatens, if 'midst anguish dark,
To things unreal the brain too thoroughly shall hark,
Confident reconstruct, from a promiscuous store,
Sounds, shapes and notions vainest, credit them the more.
How wonders manifold from inmost action rise
To be undreamed of dullards, stimulate the wise!
Soundly imagination will with knowledge play,
O'ershadow reason and yet injure not its sway;
Oft nourish an ideal and miseries thus thwart,
Perhaps the downcast soul to higher realms transport!
But even, as in each, mind-processes recur,
And are repeat ideas without a seeming spur,
So, marvels other gleam in natures animate,
As when a thought upcalls a close associate;
Or, steadfastly the brain, heeding nor shape nor wind,
Toils at a special task and seems to others blind;

Or, in an ecstasy, never regarding pain,
Under a subtle spell, new puissance would obtain ;
Dismissing every fear, wills but renown to breed,
Even, heroical, performs a splendid deed !
But, ever in the nerve-cells character has source,
Draws thence its quality, leans on their native force ;
And such as search the brain find many a special cell
Ministering unto language, hearing, sight or smell ;
So, should a flaw arise within a given spot,
Vision shall be affected, or a name forgot.
Too, as are spheres financial, of our merchants known,
E'er sensitive to winds however lightly blown ;
So, subject unto waves incessant, as disclosed,
Exists the human brain of many parts composed,
And consciousness depends, in market or the brain,
Upon the sudden changes rising clear and plain
In zones of influence. If, in the portions high,
Excitement rule the cells, soul-action may be nigh ;
But wonted messages, or weaker, scarce avail,
To stir the mind to life will, not unlikely, fail.
Still, underlings can toil when chiefs would take their rest ;
So strive the lower cells though high by sleep are pressed.
Strange soars the mystic's mind imperfectly awake !
Who in his dream would scarce a conscious effort make,
While, though by one idea to agitation wrought,
In much his brain is nigh to slothful languor brought.
So has the hypnotised high centres out of gear ;
Skilfully influenced, will lose his natural fear !

In his nerve-centres, then, less energy is born,
Few cells collaborate, and many stay forlorn.
Now, from self-ignorance, intelligence has moved,
On all sides matter's might becomes more fully proved.
Do fine activities, forming a lofty whole
Of thoughts and feelings pure, comprise the human soul?
Perchance! as noble moods idealised of love,
Transcending vulgar passion, glow mere lust above!

II

Oft-time, philosophers approaching problems deep,
From the invisible would bravely comfort reap;
As one that, swift acquiring a deserved renown,
Revives the memories of Königsberg's old town;
Had mastered every study, as it were in sport,
And to views sceptical lent vigorous retort;
Pronounced, the mind of man has limits to its powers,
Yet finds high Heaven's nature scarce beyond it towers.
To Kant appeared the marks of man's intelligence
So marvellously fine, never experience
Earthly could father them. Exists an Absolute;
Thus, only, could arise far-ranging thought acute:
Nor general ideas would blossom as result
Of judgments slowly formed: they prove a truth occult.
Too, with an abstract faith, strange as there is to find,
Turned Gottlieb Fichte soon to mysteries of mind;
In Saxon forests rude, spent solitary days,
Roamed wistful, lost in thought, of melancholy ways,
A gentle youth who grew a pure idealist,
Concluded, fathoming of what doth man consist;—

Behold, the ego thinks, is therefore all in all,
No object can appear except the ego call.
Lingers man's consciousness a part of the divine,
Summoning to the light and calling forth to shine.
Only through lofty trust can destiny be weighed,
To find the real, by ne'er a chance, shall reason aid!
Arrived a sophist skilled with arguments oblique,
Showed subject object one, and left no more to seek
Than the relationship exact between the twain,
Thus exercised his o'er-discriminating brain;
Yet Hegel's sublety, that dwelt with questions vast,
The processes of thought into confusion cast.

III

How opposite such creed to one which, seeming clear,
By mystics and the timid is surveyed with fear;
Deems higher thought and faith but changes in a brain
So complicate that none but man can them attain;
Sees all corporeal organs active, more or less,
In aiding kinds and forms of human consciousness,
Helped by environment, where each in some way tries,
E'en from the hour of birth to that wherein he dies!
Employing valiantly an energetic wit,
Yet feeling not athirst to probe the Infinite,
E'er learned Auguste Comte announced him satisfied
With knowledge can be proved; never despaired nor tried
To fathom mysteries, but asked that all revere
The great among the men and women have been here.
Upon a scroll, he drew names honoured of the dead;
In a way orderly, beneath a special head,

Each phase of knowledge traced; the social image caught
As, through long ages past, man's way was upward fought
Who, from theology and useful fictions pure,
To metaphysic passed that vainly seeks the sure;
Then, exact science reached, a widely potent force
Offering mastery upon an earthly course;
Implanting confidence and ever-growing trust,
Dread Nature will prove kind, if begged in manner just.
Held Comte that timid souls who to crude notions cling,
If they but science knew, would the true praises sing
Of knowledge, view therein a path to glorious power;
Exceedingly rejoice, each year, month, day and hour.
To worship of ideal humanity attract,
He, positive in thought, with energy attacked
Faiths transcendental, old; deemed courage should supply
Alleviation new, regardless if on high
A sage Creator rules; spake candidly, since man
Needs, for his betterment, in freedom much to plan.

IV

Then, of a breed with sound philosophy imbued,
Rose Herbert Spencer rare to carry on a feud
Against authority; finding a care supreme
In combating hoar error, waking those that dream.
By which fine purpose led and fixed desire enticed,
The hope of wife and offspring he brave sacrificed;
Despising goodly substance, lessened his small store,
Intended wealth ideal into men's minds to pour.

Embarking calmly on a very Titan's task,
He could the fullest labours of himself e'er ask;
Clear would investigate and deeply trace the cause
Of habits, customs, thoughts, ideas, religions, laws;
Exactly formulate; search into and define
All inner governance of which there is a sign
Upon our modern Earth. Showed he such lofty powers,
His theory still a beacon, ever radiance showers,
Brings him a crown of glory, since 'twas he part proved
That all things felt, seen, heard, by steady step have moved
From what has gone before.
Action and pressure, aye,
Have moulded the whole world, helped change, and growth, decay;
And naught defies the light, save only one hid Force
Sublime, unknowable, vast, of primeval source.
Zealous to understand at once the laws of life
In plants and animals and human beings rife,
Vigilant Spencer touched the nature real of thought,
Its progress both in children and the savage sought.
He deemed all creatures some intelligence reveal,
Even such lowly ones as scarcely stir or feel.
Said Darwin, Nature chooses species which shall thrive;
'Tis the best fitted that, as Spencer held, survive.
And studying whence ideas of right and wrong have sprung,
He dwelt on how to strengthen, educate the young;
Close analysed the mind with mastery complete,
Nay ventured of his own with fearlessness to treat.

To ponder was his joy, that obloquy oft braved,
Like many an ancient Greek, for verity deep craved.
But save where reason led, his soul would sharp recoil,
Finding in metaphysic naught well worth his toil
Who aimed ambitiously forward and far to reach,
All causes would examine, evolution teach;
Laboured without a pause, self-confident, humane,
Nourished a nature richly gifted to explain.
And he remembered that our life-compelling Sun
Is of the myriad shining distant orbs but one;
However certainly man's ignorance is past,
Ever the search for knowledge leaves a void at last.
So shall arise fresh sages, other masters new
Submit the Universe at times to clear review;
Revealing hidden laws, summon to their control
Ideas, as yet undreamed, to form a mightier whole;
For ne'er will thought be done, discovery at an end,
The mind must ever seek its conquests to extend,
In naught assuredly so much as potent laws
Which substance underlie, stupendous Nature cause.

V

Behold a principle in man, throughout his range:—
The reproductive germ mislikes, opposes change.
Yet, has heredity a full command o'er such?
Is saved the germ from every influence and touch,
So that no trait acquired can ever be transmit,
However calculate to make the race more fit?
Suppose a lowly newt has suffered fearful loss;
The guardian Nature o'er the mishap cannot gloss,

But undertakes the tail that fell will be renewed,
Or limb, that shed a foot, restored in magnitude.
'Twould seem, in humble types, the common cells are strong,
Can make their wishes felt. Were it conclusion wrong,
To hold, blood's elements in man a power possess
To modify the germ, alter its mightiness;
Or, that the germ receives from all-important nerves
Or penetrating lymph, an influence which serves
Seldom or oft repeat, somewhat to mould the stock,
Convey experiences, or treasures fresh unlock?
Grave sages love to hear and arguments refute,
On human origins must vigorous dispute,
Ask if the germ in strict heredity is shrined
Or ever brought to feel parental woes of mind.
One notes, man's visage in the torrid zone betrays
Accumulate effects of scorching solar rays,
Whereas his palm, despite long centuries, is pale
Because the sun's insistence can it less assail;
And then another eager, this or that disproves,
To true enlightenment swiftly his audience moves!
Yet, study of such riddles, e'en it may be soon,
Newly, surprisingly should bring to man a boon.
Meanwhile heredity, aiding a weighty task,
Cries who shall best win food; well, woman's favours ask.
Great power in parentage, and choice of partners, lies,
And such controlling reasons e'er have helped the wise,
Ay, some would now discuss how characters might blend,
An ordered spouse-selection to man's progress tend!

As poets sang in Hellas, Hebrews learnt with awe,
The guiltless suffer through a universal law;
For parents all receive and to their offspring give
Such faulty heritage as seems the price to live.
Ah, were it possible to lift the fearful load,
In part ameliorate the ills to forbears owed!
Aware how Nature's secrets prying eyes elude,
Some valiant thinkers deem it scarce a notion crude,
That someway she employs, consummate in her plan,
Her last experience when tireless shaping man.
How strangely gleams the power of reproductive germs,
When each of myriad ages a true tale affirms!
Cells become embryos, and gradually betray
A memory exact of evolution's way!
Now stress of certain ills, as observations teach,
Affect the child's well-being through the parents each;
So some incline to hold, a reproductive cell
Can propagate fresh traits in father, mother dwell;
While others from such form of acquisition turn,
Say, sires transmit no shred of what themselves may learn.
'Tis thus sage worshippers of lofty science strive,
Within the darkest maze of Cosmic mysteries dive!
Even an abbot toward research has been impelled,
Lo, Mendel in his garden shrewd inquiry held,
Deep peering into Nature's mighty methods, saw,
When species twain are fertile, yet is reign of law.
He breeds peas tall with dwarf, so gains a series tall;
Which last, inbred, show peas in many cases small;
But e'er such lesser ones in due proportion flow,
And, if in union joined, retain a stature low.

Unsate, the curious still for potent rules will seek,
Confines not unto plants his search, in manner meek;
Judges, among the hybrid tints can constant stay;
A white mouse mating grey has progeny of grey,
From which the offspring coming, seldom are hued white;
Yet a pure breed is won if, last, the white unite!
So, could we mould in man a special attribute,
Ambitiously advance through sireship's choice acute,
Into what lofty realms might we not penetrate,
Whom newer potencies and victories await?
Oh, far the bold resource of modern method seems
From pious mystic thought and metaphysic dreams!

VI

Breathe yet idealists to simple logic blind,
Disliking matter, say the world throughout is mind;
Holding, a leaf is naught, valiant declare as much,
Vow, never proof it lives is won from sight or touch!
Still, sight of many men, with effort small, perceives
A green and veined adornment unto branches cleaves
How could the same, at once, in numerous minds have birth,
Had it not substance true possessing solid worth?
But clever pragmatists, ambitious to be wise,
So love the useful, they the highest truth despise.
E'en physicists there are with matter would have done!
Metaphysicians grave the obvious can shun,
Noting cell wonders, shrink at marvels of the brain;
Wrathfully hear research would mysticism explain,
Nor from their haughtiness and pride of faith recede,
Desire from every truth distasteful to be freed!

There live who reckon brutes of every fancy void,
That slumbering hounds are ne'er by visions false annoyed,
The thrush that taps the lawn ne'er counts upon his prey,
The nightingale and skylark callous pour their lay,
The tiny roving ant, generous to its guest,
Is moved by paltry instinct when it offers rest;
E'en if a feathered throat laments that lovers roam
And spurn the dainty shells arranged to deck the home;
They say an animal ne'er knows a lofty thought,
Intensity of hope! other becomes than naught!
But will not callow hounds, steeds high-strung, show affright,
In a rare circumstance, as if at magic's sight?
Man finds the traits of fancy, mystery and fear
Wrapt in their humble breasts, if he sufficient peer;
Nay, traits magnanimous, at times, will make them seen
And lessen much the distance man and brute between.
Before an eager throng, amidst a dazzling glare,
And din of babbling voices, louder trumpets' blare,
A band of lissom tigers, in an iron cage,
Obeyed the trainer's word, controlled their sullen rage
'Fore one that, scarcely gentle, ever cautious turned,
Aware of gleaming fangs, the cruel eyes which burned.
Snatched at the tamer's arm with strong and horrid jaws
A brute on high had waved its restless heavy paws,
But hurtled through the air on the striped form an ape,
Become a cause for wrath, allowed a friend's escape,
Proved that a humble mind of loftiness could dream,
Harbour nobility of nature in its scheme!

Maintaining ancient ways, beasts upon beasts oft war
And are pronounced machines soulless and nothing more
By those who know that men ruthless each other kill,
A ghastly destiny yet vigorous fulfil.
To-day, incessantly the mysteries of life
Call for attention, stir to honourable strife
Fine intellects of sages greedy to lay bare
Of every creature's being causes secret, rare.

VII

High on a rolling Down at noonday may be seen,
With azure overhead, while near are blades of green
(Though northward, villages a fertile plain delight,
And southward stretch smooth seas, or billows crested white)
A thickly coated flock anxious for waters cool
When April's bounteousness has filled the chalky pool.
Lambkins march timidly, under a sober lead,
Till when at last they haste, irregularly speed,
The shepherd does not fail with an unerring wit,
To mark the differences 'twixt fitted and less fit.
How long had truths essential fruitless met the eye,
When Darwin gazed intent on earth and sea and sky,
Lavished his energy, supreme intelligence,
'Stablished a puissant law with cogent eloquence!
Sure dreamed the ancient Greeks of evolution's tide,
But slowly moderns showed like bravery and pride!
Declared Linnæus;—oft fresh species are create,
Whose loss was set by Cuvier to Earth's mood irate,
Advancing far, Lamarck, ere long had lucid shown,
Creatures adapt themselves, where'er by fortune thrown.

Deemed he such change endures, and that heredity
Transmits acquired traits, so tends to multiply
The types of living things; because gradations small,
Uninterrupted, can a newer form instal.
And, while 'twas whispered long, ne'er seemed it clearly proved
That, upward from mere brutes, imperious man has moved,
Until a thinker searching deeper than the rest
Marshalled his evidence, boldly conclusions pressed.
For one to wear a surplice, brief had felt inclined,
Yet soon, as through his life, for Nature's study pined,
Devoting years to travel, lone pursuits adored,
Darwin must widely mark and observations hoard.
Deduces he each truth surely as it appears,
Then seeks his native land, at peace, secure from fears,
Though sickness stays his lot, writes in a country home,
With effort vigorous, a right convincing tome
Much and long pondered o'er; displays his intercourse
With countless forms of life, all he has found the source
Of species' origin. Nor when he thus had spoke,
Could argument affect or make him aught revoke.
What Spencer thought of all things, Darwin proved of one;—
Alters each living shape; so Nature's work is done!
It was his lot a far-off continent to range,
And mark how surely, slowly, beasts their form will change;
To treat of animals diverse, as well as man,
And for advance, retreat, a cause sufficient scan.
Suppose a creature win a right and proper mate,
Parental traits will in the young have special weight;

But no descendant is another wholly like,
Ever the difference will observers sharply strike.
Now some, that well in one environment shall roam,
Can offspring rear disposed to find another home;
And, there, but such of them eventually survive,
As, in conditions rude, sternly, persistent strive.
With frequent generations, soon should live some young
In part dissimilar from stock whence first they sprung;
Which process is repeat, and so may gleam at last,
An epoch when, to full, the earlier sort has passed;
Meanwhile has come a fresh, suitable, settled type
Destined to breathe until the hour for change is ripe.
Thus Nature smiles on forms which hardship best endure;
Ruthlessly plays, but would variety ensure.
E'er for his work consummate, Darwin will be known,
As where the marks of feeling, he in man has shown
Resemble those of beasts. The sneerer's lip is curled,
What doth the furious hound that hath defiance hurled?
As pampered children pout, or, moved to anger, bite,
Somewhat the apes are prone enemies to affright;
Warm-hearted girls and boys caress the folk they love,
And cats will press against whom fate has set above;
As animals, in terror, greater size affect,
Man's hair from wrath or fear, will even stand erect.
If Darwin treasure found, he yet anew embarked
In learning's endless quest, to instincts noble harked.
Truly his intellect and goodness should endear,
For ne'er a kindlier heart was joined to thought severe.

Laborious, skilful, wise, marshalling facts to show
How, from small origins, life could stupendous grow,
He found new verities; proving their value vast,
Lustre eternally on glorious science cast.

VIII

Oft are held arrogant such as Earth's tale recall!
Aiming to pass a human measurement o'er all,
Despising mystic help, by Cosmic doctrines led,
They seem with impious thought of evolution wed!
Since yet, as in the past, for Heavenly solace sigh
Most wishing not that doubt upon their souls should lie,
In the great Universe omniscient Mind perceive,
Marvels too wonderful for merely laws to weave.

Though man must ever, bowing to a lordship vast,
Acknowledge the full influence of his ancient past;
Feeling at liberty, he high attention gives
To the opinion, rules of those 'mongst whom he lives;
Since e'er the normal mind has fear of social laws,
Cares not if will be free, but hates to lose applause.

But some, apart from Heaven, would moral natures train;
Leaning on reason, fashion childhood's plastic brain,
Affirm the certain ties of each to all around,
Stir every wholesome taste wherewith folk should be bound.

Awaking interest they, despite the rudest soil,
Would reap a race of sons worthy the master's toil;
Though 'tis reflective years after a fettered youth
Which claim successfully to conquer haughty truth,
When may the deeper tastes surprise and stir the heart,
Give solid zest to life, a fulness fresh impart.

How e'en folk unimportant that events observe,
Transcend the dull who never from indifference swerve,
That sunk in lethargy, despise all play of thought
And, spurning vital questions, ne'er to warmth are brought!

As an astronomer, enchanted by a star
Coming within his view, well knows, beyond, afar
Continue gorgeous kingdoms, quarries for the mind;
So, loving arduous toil, the student of mankind,
Drawn by the problems of man's nature intimate,
Dazzled by treasure rich, is never satiate.

He seizes but to prove, behind remains still more,
And thus, despondent oft, bitterly may deplore
His visioned term of life, experiences yet joy
That new researches sweet, unending should employ
Others long after him, e'en truer victories bring
To stimulate the soul, through spheres of knowledge ring.

IX

As death's fell triumph e'er must lie beyond the reach
Of energy would nigh laws natural impeach,
Eternally will traits mysterious of sex
Interest the thoughtful, haunt and oftentime perplex.

Like seems a burst of grief in infant girl and boy,
Like gleam on tiny faces signs of placid joy,
But, with the years, one begs a sword for dire offence,
The other with a doll reveals a mother's sense.
Yearnings for sports and games next in his mind prevail,
And she her gentler soul on fancies will regale;
Then spade or pen he wields, or steps a warrior bold,
Upon her spends his glance, compliment manifold.

While, if small woes arrive, perchance her tears are seen,
He manifests ere long unmoved a sturdy mien,
Desirous to succeed, has almost all forgot
Save love, renown or gold, must therefore scheme and plot,
Submit and suffer risk, but pine for wealth or name,
Measureless love bestow on one who fans his flame
And, being sensitive, would seek affection more,
A dear one close embrace or God or art adore.
As to the nobler part, the woman's or the man's,
It may be hers that for self-sacrifice oft plans,
With throbbing heart has on forlorn and weak ones smiled,
Been willing nigh to die to save a stricken child !
And yet, stern efforts weigh : long struggles of themselves
Show clearly his deserts that shrewdly digs and delves,
Strives in his manly way to reach a certain mark,
Covets, his neighbours shall unto his triumphs hark.
Alas ! from honest toil a few unwilling shrink,
Grow by the notion hurt, even inclined to think,
In effort lies disgrace. So, Nature blindly just,
Them or their offspring mars, evinces her disgust ;
Who in a kindlier mood, conferring happiness,
Successfully desires with benefits to bless.
Thus she suffuses oft with love's transcendent glow,
Hearts of the desolate ; or tireless aims to know
That a youth virtuous doth a maid idolise,
Being stirred by recollection of bright, gentle eyes,
With rapturous shy glances tells his inner flame,
Whose moods of hesitation, sighs confused, proclaim

How, in a virile moment, valour would win Heaven,
Arrive at blessings should the worst mischances leaven.
Nor fails love's choicest flower, that makes all else beside
Distasteful, lacking worth, to be a cause of pride,
A special sustenance for her of gentle heart,
Who sees in tenderness a wondrous, holy part
Of all life's potencies, and oft her thought employs
In happy visions, hope of calm and sacred joys.
'Midst love's delights the youth walks so intoxicate,
He would accept forthwith a strange or cruel fate
To gain a favour, smile. Treads he one moment air
As Heaven's light, then faces earth, in dread despair,
Because her haunting look, cooing or wounded voice,
Can bring him agony or make him thrilled rejoice
An angel lives. Invested seems her shape divine
With every beauty could from goddesses forth shine;
Even in lashes, hair and brow, lips, neck there lie
Compelling forces, charms, for him shall never die.
Her hand, was ever such? That nestling softly thrills
His very soul, confesses trust, contented fills
His clasp more tightly pressed. What reinforcements strong
Grants each embrace to moods of love which make him long
For perfect bliss secure, when none shall have a right
To snatch away his prize, adorable delight!
She will his foibles learn, undreamed ones surely find,
Yet in redeeming virtues (fate being not unkind
Nor always hard) perchance, equalisation gain:
Now, of his bosom wife, will oft require, obtain

Homage affectionate, subservience of a sort
Not always by him guessed; a sympathy extort
Ceaseless, immeasurable; e'en seem o'er-sensitive
As unto trifling words should scarce in memory live.
Thus will a passing quarrel prove a ready snare,
Encourage after pain, entail a load of care;
Until, when bonds of love have certain grown and true,
Neither will deem all joy for ever severed through
By disagreements small, forget each confidence
May usher in new days of further peace immense.
And if should now the gentler higher grow than wife,
Pride, of endurance born, sudden will make her life
What ne'er it was before. Nor act of after-stress
Shall anyway her right to gratitude make less,
Since on each mother's head is set a dazzling crown
And nought she does can late diminish her renown
That has learned more of life than know men great and wise.
So, holy grown for aye in a good husband's eyes,
As an interpreter of a strange mystery,
Nigher to things divine than man can hope to be,
Uplifted and enthralled, she views her helpless one,
Gave she for whom her life, not then enough were done:
Though his, more hers: to all a radiant, wondrous proof,
Woman, inspired by love, can ever hold aloof
From self-regard; display nobility profound,
Etherealize awhile her race at one short bound.
No-way can now the mother her rapt joy convey
As through the months she sees her infant, day by day,

Her glory growing strong, perhaps a wished man-
child
With dimpled cheek, lips pouted, eyes serene and
mild!
And if, with generous heart, she shows her lord, as
well,
An emblem of herself, his gratitude to swell,
Infancies twain renew his spirit and her own,
Nor for their loss could treasure magical atone.
Now father, mother often strange amazement feel,
Learning how offspring e'er new charms and traits
reveal;
Ah, 'tis the endless joys thus falling in each lap,
Bringing great happiness, due stoic force can sap!
Ready remorselessly to strike at bliss a blow,
On scenes idyllic there may steal a fearful foe,
Hover with rustling wings about a little bed,
Inspire in aching hearts a nameless shuddering dread
And, as a plague's foul breath, then on the mother fall,
Who would life's self assign her child unharmed to
call.
As anxious moments creep, and slow drags every
hour,
Distraught with fear, she shows more than has seemed
her power,
If crushed, feels bitterness beyond the thought of man:
If blessed, such ecstasy as all must joy to scan.
The mother's jealous care will lovingly beget
Trustfulness more sublime than otherwhere is met,
Much as a father's sterner tenderness should draw
From shyness a requital, mingled yet with awe.
How stirs the likeness of himself a father's heart
Given to think his son shall fill a worthy part;

While, by the gaze all frank and independence quaint,
Or romping carelessness, demureness of a saint,
Or wisdom strange of one like to her mother dear,
He in his soul is touched and almost moved to fear!
Life's cycle, so begun, then a conclusion waits,
For birth's harsh complement ruthless exterminates;
And surely, soon or late, the hideous blow is felt
Of force stupendous that can ne'er in pity melt.
Affection's severance is ever woe compressed,
And all would somehow stay an evil manifest;
So, when 'tis destiny for old and young to say,
At last the hour has come, behold the fatal day,
Often it sadly falls that none is well prepared:
Each hoping further joys, on a long respite dared
To build in peril's face: or some in innocence
Breathe ignorant of truth. Those have had griefs intense
A helplessness o'erwhelms, adds to their depth of gloom,
As solemn thoughts approach foreshadowing the tomb.
But dreadful Nature rules that some must go before,
Though miserable tears from grief-filled eyes shall pour;
So the grim monarch calls insistent, pitiless,
Unmoved by racking cries, sad lingering caress;
Feints not of lighter purpose, mere to terrify,
But such a wound inflicts, the victim needs must die,
While reverently kneel, sorrowing, lost in awe
The near, not all resigned that Cosmic powers withdraw
One that was loved. And e'er the tragedy reveals
Truths which a light defence or fixed intent conceals;—
That men to subtle, universal Law are naught;
With ills unalterable the highest gift is fraught;

Alway, 'midst endless scenes of mingled pleasure, pain,
Now life conspires, now death the other to arraign.
Shall toss and foam swift streams, destroy the mountain side,
Sweet lilies bloom and fade, earthward rose petals glide,
Shall lands prove bountiful and all things feel the storm :
Ever will Nature reign and haughtily transform !

X

Manifold are the moods and varied is their aim,
Though folk stay everywhere in many things the same,
With feelings that shall slumber, or swift rouse to life
In husband, son or father, daughter, mother, wife ;
For even maidens sweetest, goodly youths show traits,
That, full developed, later by their force amaze.
Thus woman can be softness, gentleness supreme,
Maintain a pious faith, rigidity's extreme ;
By sense of sin o'erwhelmed, uttering scarce a word,
Save in the chaunt or prayer, remain by all unheard ;
Dream in a rapturous state of naught but solemn bliss,
Treasuring Heavenly hope, all other thought dismiss.
And men exist that seldom sensuous pleasures spurn,
Nor from the frequent winecup, vile debauches turn ;
Living impenitent, in conscience seem unstung,
Quitting at last the scene by grim remorse unwrung.
'Twixt categories such, most breathe (as Earth revolves)
Sustaining well their part, declaring good resolves,
Zealous attend to needs, duties oft opposite,
Display them neither saints nor yet for love unfit.

Doomed are the greater mass to constant, irksome toil,
Linger within the city, or ne'er leave the soil;
But, whether in the fields or 'midst the factory's din,
Early they strive for food, to struggle soon begin,
Know small reward, relief from ceaseless efforts brave
That give a zest to life until arrives the grave;
For fear of some disaster hovers o'er their eyes,
A mortgage must be met, the cost of bread may rise,
Or illness come, employers fail, the mine shut down
And the dread word go forth, at once to swim or drown.
But comfort grows apace, and swift the class more large
Can generous behave and moderate dues discharge;
Will help the church or sport or visit oft the play,
Joyous departing, take each year a holiday;
Threading no crowded street, nor hastening to a car
In answer to the call of business regular;
Foregoing jostled progress toward the daily task,
'Scaping another's will, beside the sea can bask.
Such likes strict government or holds a forward view,
Assured its own opinion is both sound and true;
On books spends careless moments, dreams of money most,
Draws nearer the success allows the heart to boast;
Feels that prosperity is ne'er to be despised,
Therefore for its attainment much is exercised.
Delight a richer folk in fashion's sumptuous style,
Safe capital and interest high would reconcile,
Let journals chronicle their goings to and fro,
And confident of merit, would the world should know.
Remain the privileged, through might of wealth, the few
With potencies stupendous easy to eschew;

Can each æsthetic whim fastidious appease,
Surfeit in luxury unending, if it please;
Or, well inspired to prove their dignity and worth,
Will help their fellows, the unfortunate of Earth.
For ever o'er this ancient slow-improving world,
On poverty's sharp rock despairing crowds are hurled;
So wretched peasants shelter in mud cabins small,
Or humble moujiks taste conditions should appal.
There, in an attic bare whose roof admits the storm,
Courageously a worker bends his anxious form;
Here, hungry city-wolves, in dens scarce reached by light,
Treat sullenly the hours before the favouring night.
True is it, oft the weak commanded are by power,
Resigning them to groan, beneath ill-treatment cower;
Since lives the wretch that surely on base knowledge thrives,
Robs fools whom lust for gain of scanty sense deprives!
Or villainy sows ruin since there are that trust
And find, in lieu of savings, naught to buy a crust.
Or knaves can set opponents falsely in the wrong
And ruthless win a cause by litigation long;
While, sadly, the worst rogue will oftenest escape
For riper cunning whispers how his course to shape.
But ever rise amends! since, if some sinful err,
Some to unfortunates will life-long minister,
Display a warmth of heart unselfish that exalts,
Beneficent redeems a weaker neighbour's faults.
While never lack occasions for persistence, craft,
The talent requisite to point a piercing shaft,
Or opportunities for valour, strength and skill,
Linking a force combined of judgment, nerve and will;
For love, or praise, or gain, man against man must fight,
Health in the contest seek, obtain therein delight,

Surely developing, in something can show zeal,
With opportunity his character reveal.
So one who, more than all else, dreams of winning gold,
Despairs, with coffers full, being of losses told;
Another seems distraught if guineas stay unspent,
To compass happiness must live improvident.
In trifling peril one shall tremble for his life
While others' eyes will kindle at the thought of strife;
Here is an honest soul must ceaseless toil and sweat,
And there the miserly discharges not a debt;
E'er one of poetry, high art or beauty raves,
Another to all women frigidly behaves!
As outwardly divulged through vivid mark and sign
Which swiftly burst restraint, in open daylight shine;
Severely passions rule, whene'er the choice is free,
Oft caution disavow, shun reason's cold decree.
A dainty, fairy kiss angelic, coy and mild
Delightfully is proffered by a little child;
A surer token sweet of love and true respect
Comforts the mother whom fond offspring would protect;
While differs the embrace, close pressed, that maddens, thrills,
And for awhile will cure the worst of human ills!
But hatred, springing from whate'er can deep displease,
(As contests pitiless and bitter rivalries
And harsh neglect, oppression, e'en contempt oft shown)
Ne'er fails of numerous signs becoming quickly known;—
Witness the stare defiant, insolent, calm sneer,
Rude laugh unnatural, port too devoid of fear;
Still worse, may come at last, such hideous evil look
As none, that gazed upon it, ever well mistook,

Surely, or love or hate, it may be in disguise,
In some way, at the root of every passion lies!
A proud pomposity depends upon the twain,
Would deference unearned contemptuously gain.
How thrives a lust of might, thoughtless of others' heed,
On wild ambition, envious jealousy or greed!
And even saintly souls, in much above reproof,
Can, frowning upon rivals, hold themselves aloof.
But, if thin lips compressed, beneath a piercing gaze,
Small brow and heavy jaw show bigotry could blaze,
E'er the frank steadfast look, and hearty ringing voice,
And the warm ready hand make all the world rejoice.

How the observer hopes in vain for precepts terse
Should character decipher amidst marks perverse!
For complex Nature makes, in lieu of simple man,
One aiming to be truthful, honest when he can,
Who sometime must combine, in daily quest of pelf,
The weight of others' interest with the claims of self.

And altruistic conduct scarce were always meet,
Would 'minish energy, the general good defeat.
Yet, to prove merciless toward victims in one's power!
Thrice happy, blest is he, as hour succeeds to hour,
Who right determines with but brief or no debate,
Helped by a conscience sound and duly animate.

Subtly devotion stirs the minds of wellnigh all,
So, a true love can oft for long the soul enthral
That tends to visualise the hoped-for and ideal,
Ever must gaze aloft and elevate the real.
The sweet maid thinks her swain could lead a battle charge;
A mouse to the close captive seems a prince at large!

While for his heart's desire, each will himself despoil,
Aiding his loved ones, feel vast pleasure e'en in toil,

Alas! with hate or fear and power, may come a creed
That adamantine shrinks from no unhallowed deed:
Then man can fiendish grow, enjoy relentless sway,
Turn to a tigerish brute teasing his tortured prey!
But joys are manifold! 'Tis light to tell a few,
And mark, in fresh surroundings they can change their hue.
As Crœsus shall exult that all his riches know,
The honest cottager, is happy naught to owe.
While the great lady, beaming, greets a brilliant throng,
The gudewife's comfort is that man and bairns are strong;
So, if choice wine and viands aid the princely feast,
Charms of the humblest fare for some have never ceased.
How mightily the scent and form of roses charm,
Anigh the trimmest lawn, or on the rudest farm!
Much as the bolder souls who visit classic scenes,
The modest traveller can joy in bowered demesnes.
While, seeking golden ore, some grow enthralled with hope,
Others as sanguine shall in regions duller grope.
One scales high mountain peaks and one in a small boat
With but his faithful dog, o'er Ocean-depths will float.
Fondles the raptured mother her soft babe to sleep;
But blissfully young maids into the future peep.
Sonatas exquisite delight, enchant the soul;
Stir likewise martial strains as drums reverberant roll.
One the excitement asks of vivid hopes and fears,
Another things abstruse, or sentiment and tears;
Some hunt with hounds and horses, cleave to gun and rod,
Others join mystical with all-pervading God.

E'er Nature sure commands that man shall onward press,
Through ways unnumbered win a meed of happiness;
And most can such attain through honest toil and skill,
The deeds and thoughts a lifetime almost ceaseless fill.
The optimist decides that all was made for joy,
In a bewitching world no wrong can right alloy.
His search convinces him, nigh everything is good,
Even he might inhabit an enchanted wood
Where, clad in green and red, fairies on tiny steeds
Choosing delicious paths, arrive at moonlit meads,
Anon disport to peals of lightest merriment;
While ne'er an urchin sly by hideous goblin sent
Disturbs the revel: whence, each dances 'midst the flowers,
Makes gay to jocund airs. If not thus flit the hours,
The little company of elfin-folk or fays,
Ensconced in dewy bowers, spend happy restful days!
Can it be truly wise to strive for better things
Than apathetic rule or chance capricious brings?
If any dare to doubt whatever is, is best,
How makes a lack of faith his folly manifest!
Too, breathe the gloomy, who thoughts opposite instil,
Shrink from, on every side, a dark insensate will
O'erwhelming, terrible: a vague but Cosmic force
Having against mankind to tireless ire recourse!
Full strange is the disorder such a mind afflicts,
Unto unhappiness and melancholy addicts
(E'er magnifying evils and incessant woes
Which callous fate or Nature on our race bestows)
Depreciates the progress won by strenuous man,
Since first he showed the traits sending him to the van

Of countless living forms; that has once lived on roots,
And little separate been from wild and sullen brutes!
Though troubles still arise and ask swift means of cure,
Remains it but to strive and better so endure:
Vile misery abounds, yet it was grievous, sore,
Worse in the fearful ages can arrive no more.
But, under every harsh and strange oppressive fact
Of Nature rests a cause, not a malignant act.
Inexorable laws shall 'minished evil fling
At one who dauntless wills to tilt at suffering,
Far his attention turns, science no more neglects,
Stern on himself relies and each false step corrects.

XI

And Nature, that oft wishes Earth's chief race to spur,
Observant speaks and warns when man inclines to err!
If aimest, over-valiant, to subdue the world
Presuming, thou shalt tremble, be from sureness hurled;
Dread Cosmic laws will teach thee, being yester made,
More humbly to advance, with reverence invade!
'Tis night, but Nature smiles and seas benignant vie
In seeming kindliness, with starry gems on high;
Oblivion has obscured the tempests of the past,
Reigns stillness in the air; around, the peace is vast
As southerly of bleak Newfoundland's stormy cape,
Eastward and westward, vessels strenuous courses shape,
Less like the little barques, breeze-wafted, of our sires
Than sumptuous palaces, sea-driven by hid fires.
Swift hastes, unknowing fear, of these the mightiest,
Treasures an active throng, grown careless, lulled to rest,
Disturbed in naught; assured nor chance nor evil will
Can harm such puissant witness of man's dexterous skill.

Wherefore, as sudden comes Nature's austere reproof
And jarring call to keep from frozen realms aloof,
Few only can believe fell dangers thus arrive!
Unaltered trustfulness and placid calm survive.
But warn the gleaming ice blocks, on the decks, of woe,
Torrents disquieting prove fearful rifts below,
Whence soon the steadfast captain, showing thought for all,
Provides lest they, alas! to the sea's mercy fall,
Orders it so that while, at parting, they oft wept,
Women and children shivering into boats down-leapt;
Though some of noble soul, at overwhelming cost,
Transcend in sacrifice that others be not lost;
And some would stay with husbands, yield their final breath
Beside those dear to them when came the hour of death.
E'er sinks the giant ship as if by jealous force
Torn from the sway of those in whom she had her source;
Falls, snatched relentlessly, and summoned far, for aye,
From precincts where man's prowess must itself display;
From busy highways seen of sun and moon and cloud,
Descends to be enwrapt within a watery shroud.
Yet the disaster falls on men not prone to cower,
And courage stays abundant in that midnight hour:
Sound order is observed; are used both head and heart,
Even to music's strains the fugitive depart.
Then last he said, who on the wounded vessel reigned,
His men had served the weak and liberty well gained;

And, tense, they asked themselves, had sent each life-
boat's load,
What more was due from them, by manhood yet was
owed?
Ocean the pitiless, two thousand fathoms deep,
Stupendous in its power, for evermore will keep,
Perchance 'midst creatures strange and wondrous plants
and weeds,
That shattered monument of later human needs!
Straightway she plunges downwards, makes the souls
distraught,
Of all, with starting eyes, the awful scene have caught;
All, listless in their boats, to shudder, grow more pale,
Listening against their will unto the piercing wail
Of a great host engulfed whose agonies they learn,
As such to harshest Nature wretchedly return.
Now joy he knows who seeks the stricken, nor can
pause,
With strong right arm the drowning from destruction
draws,
Inspirits others near, or sensitive or bold,
That droop appalled, dire suffer from the numbing cold.
Ah, more! it came to one heroical to save
Poor tortured derelicts adrift upon the wave,
Since, at his post remaining, he had struck aghast
Vessels afar with news of peril looming fast;
With ceaseless sparks electric, skilfully contrived,
Despising his own weal, that rescue sure arrived.
Change loyal friends their course, with throbbing
engines speed,
Distracted, scarce can trust to think of those in need;
Descry, at last approach, and kindly succour bring,
From an o'erwhelming ill remove in part the sting.

The news to men ashore means sorrow-laden fears,
In a world tremulous! but each rejoicing hears
"Women and children first" was the command obeyed,
When folk of the *Titanic* death's call would evade;
Exults that who o'er seas troop far-off lands to scan,
With messages etheric potently shall span
Leagues isolating less the traveller than of yore!
All so appreciate what science has in store
Ills to ameliorate, and, reeling from a blow,
Welcome a consolation 'minishing their woe.

XII

Manners and customs, laws are subject unto change,
One era prizes what another deems is strange;
Ever the richest treasure yields to something new,
Fading, the latest fashion swift becomes tabu.
So many a novel thought is ridiculed or cursed
Until, with suddenness, opinion is reversed;
Or, old sagacity and wisdom are forgot,
Dulled and obscured depart, on annals seem a blot.
No more by speech or space the lands are separate
Than by the maxims, ways therein predominate:
Still parents oft, in China, future brides enslave,
Distorting little feet, inhumanly behave;
But, too, scourged savagely were fighters, close at hand,
Ere sudden pity snatched from shame our happier land.
Thus even many folk can sternest methods use,
Shocking the sensitive, themselves of phlegm accuse,
As when through solitude a culprit they o'ertame,
Diminish sore his manhood, mental puissance maim.
For when alone, o'erwhelmed, he first begins to cower
Such is conceived to be for discipline the hour;

No soothing voice shall cure, relieve his reeling thought,
He must be punished and perchance to peril brought,
Kept for a while apart to ponder without pause:
A wronged Society regards not Nature's laws!
Since Christ was crucified the interval is long,
But ceaselessly the race doing so vast a wrong
Have, here and there, been beaten with a savage glee
As, strangely valiant, spreading e'en from sea to sea,
They gathered in the gold of many a gentile land,
With eager, patient, timid, skilful, sordid hand!
And, changing not, yet, some can persecute the Jews,
A folk its modern wealth untiringly renews,
Whose holy books exert still influence sublime,
Despite their power is less than in an earlier time.
For critics sacred writings scan with anxious care,
Would learn if ancient transcendental claims are fair.
Hence, many let their plans and hopes of spiritual health
Concentred stay within the social commonwealth;
Decide a myth poetic is not free from hurt,
To needs of children shows in part attention curt;
Recall, in barbarous ages, was adored a fiend,
Or one, with man himself, to cruelty oft leaned;
Grieve that the good, long dealing unbelievers woes,
With rigour Heaven's gates against the throng could close.
Strange seem those early bigots, nigh beyond our ken,
Creep to our memories as if lured by a pen
Outworn, that led to write, dull labours at a task
Whose purport every reader soon is forced to ask!

Oft the ill-balanced mind or tortured intellect
Can find a haven in the fetish of a sect;
Such as Flagellants who with blood God's wrath assuage,
Victims austerest of a superstitious age;
Or Trappists ever mute, or scant-clothed Doukhobors,
And many wondrous folk embalmed in history's stores!
So dreamy exaltation seemingly assists
The vague imaginings of grave theosophists,
Fakirs and western saints of deathless energy
Desirous their sad souls to loose from misery.
For, lofty-soaring thought, with love of the obscure
And the scarce possible, can spellbound make the pure,
While tired natures welcome, as a last resort,
Tenets a vigorous hour inclines not to support.
Yet reasoners who rare aloud to God appeal,
E'en in their solitude, truly the mystery feel
Of the great Universe; shall live as reverent
As those a habitude of worship may have sent
To the cathedral aisle or yew-tree'd country fane,
Where ancient holy calm and sweetness souls enchain.

XIII

Now drawn are disputants unto an ancient theme,
To equalize men's substance, active, valiant scheme;
Feeling in mighty gains of other folk a spur,
Would for the common good, with eager hand transfer
Houses and acres, mines and every enterprise,
That the State over such all care may exercise:
A course opposed by those efficiency conceive
Is aided by rewards as each man shall achieve.
Meanwhile a serious struggle, intermittent war,
Is waged by workers oft, masters against, for more

Advantage unto toil and less to foresight, skill,
And large resource and brave, indomitable will.
With suddenness, the toilers stay the ready hand,
Close up their serried ranks, idly together stand
Till loss brings settlement, or, to give conflict pause,
The Senate sagely wields the influence of laws.
Thus, in the modern world anxieties increase,
Factions prepare for efforts sore opposed to peace;
Ever a hope to rise, dissatisfaction, strife,
Form the concomitants of newer social life!
How skill upon the mart confers a wondrous might
Should sate a monarch or great president delight!
For wealth can, owning journals, spread each doctrine willed;
Libraries, churches, universities upbuild;
Or it can threaten famine, commerce' strongholds storm,
Almost a nation's customs alter or transform;
Maintain, inspire, exalt, endeavour to cast down,
Continue effort till success doth purpose crown:
E'en it can war assist, then cry to chiefs enough!
Give coldly prayers for gold an answering rebuff!

XIV

And war! how strange that man, a temple of the soul,
The last of Nature's triumphs, highest on the scroll
Of her successive wonders, oft-time should be seen
In numbers bullet-pierced, as he were dull and mean,
But fit, in truth, to be with lowly creatures classed,
The victim of an ineradicable past,
Offering evidence, in brain-bespattered shot
And bloody dinted blades, of humanism forgot!
In battle mingle skill and many blundering deeds;
Heroes are hurled to death or left as broken reeds,

The tortured, mangled living that could all things dare,
Suffer thirst's agony, forsaken long, despair;
While the staunch steed in terror faces anguish slow
And fighters nobly dead are laid in ghastly row!
Oh, ruthless spectacle of valour bringing grief,
Fame's zealous adjuvant, measure of stature brief,
Thou must continue long the thoughtful to perplex
And the believers in a love divinest vex!

If war breeds shining courage, and is later fraught
With opportunity for changes should be wrought,
Still, in the home arrive deep sighs and bitter tears,
And a revengeful zeal directing men's careers.
Victors nor vanquished from vile losses can escape;
Poisoned stay memory's wounds, ever incline to gape;
While pitiless ambition on man's blood must feast,
Encourage devastation until rage has ceased!

Yet now the dazzling light of arbitration's star
Pierces the gloomy cloud that alway, near and far,
Has hidden from man's gaze the highest altitude:
May no tempestuous outburst, or dire ghastly feud
Darken the sky for those who late begin to hope
An age pacific soon for humankind will ope!
Then would toils guerdon gather; stimulus be felt
By arts beneficent, and selfish feeling melt
More swiftly since the Senates could attention turn
To causes misery for folk o'erfrequent earn.
How long a scanty blundering heed to ills was given,
Because lacked peaceful leisure, knowledge had not thriven!

XV

But ever imperfection marks the thought of man,
Who even now must weird and vain allurements scan:

Know dreamy helplessness ; often subdue his mind
To worship wonders false, and walk of vision blind ;
In many a form of magic find a potent force,
Whereunto for his comfort he can have recourse.
So, the improbable to many seems profound,
Charming especially the more it is unsound.
Before he shows his power with spirits of the air,
Oft the sly medium will engage in solemn prayer,
In priestly garb and trance exhibit vaunted might,
Ay, miracles announce, if victims but requite !
Then some, on things obscure unfitted to debate,
Would with credulity the doubtful penetrate,
Neglectful of a peril unto health and weal,
Encourage clever folk coarse magic to reveal,
E'en claim an influence, authoritative, dire
Which shall to wield a sway o'er moral acts aspire !
Still, if abuses surge or threat a nation's ways,
Before the fateful hour, some patriot inveighs ;
Bold orators, skilled scribes, the evil stern withstand,
And legists set to work improvement to command ;
So that, if necessary, the wise in courts review
The acts of each offender, and award his due.
All love the spectacle of Justice calm, intent,
Determined to know much and never ruled or bent
By bias, prejudice. So the pursuit of right
Stirs by its majesty beholders to delight.
Yet, blemishes appear, since, as in a fell crowd,
Those separately are dumb, or scarcely speak aloud,
Together cry for blood, responsible being none ;
By methods fixed and old some harshness may be done !
Unused to beg for quarter, foolish mercy show,
A pleader to conclusions may arrive but slow.

Or litigants, who find their counsellors scarce move,
Doubt, caution, precedent infirm assistants prove,
Must nourish a fond hope, when harassed by delay,
That, on a swift approaching and auspicious day,
Genius will blossom forth to simplify, protect,
Evince nobility and ardent intellect;
Assert 'twere well the land should jurists elevate
To legal heights whence they reforms should indicate,
Studying culprit-kind, ever revenge oppose;
Listen to disputants, and mitigate their woes.
Now, of our Commonweal, to mend and cure each fault
Itself doth recommend, and so the race exalt;
Hence some reflecting, groan, although the air is ours,
Destiny others with the soil beneath us dowers;
'Twere well to modify old systems and allot
Lands to make strong the State, and such as are forgot.
E'en energetic souls a method would instal
Whereby to benefit the people, one and all;
Lessen the interval 'twixt poverty and wealth,
Fearless improve the stock giving the Nation health.

XVI

Oft ancient poets sang the islands of the blest,
And sages high set forth the State ideal with zest,
Too, Satirists have struck at foibles of the great;
Now will a humble scribe but verity narrate!
Behold, although afar, in Ocean nigh alone,
A people at this hour their character make known
Who live in little Ewis, isle, as travellers tell,
Having a quality much interest should compel.
There kindly Nature smiles, every advantage yields,
Lavishes minerals beneath the verdant fields;

Smooth lawn and park abound, trim hedges meet the
view,
But for a threatening sky, would be Elysium true!
Ewisians claim descent from venturous sea-kings:
Have long observed such pure religious cult as brings
A steady discipline; nay, still are righteous folk,
Not slow among themselves censorship to invoke.
But from a pristine glory they have sadly passed
To speak of championships and feats of swiftness vast!
Who, through this island small, were famed for manly
sport,
In lieu to-day in throngs to playing fields resort,
Arriving, but proceed by valiant deputy
As if their maxim were to husband energy;
Straining to see the bold pursue the flying ball,
They such inspirit the loud plaudit to forth call.
Joyful in danger's midst, Ewisians must provide
Ample and ready means to satisfy their pride,
Let peril even now bring them a pleasant thrill,
For loud a rumour spreads that one of puissant will
Would dispossess them of an ancient sovereign right,
Ay, test their seamanship and skill in open fight.
In such an hour of care, when foes would rude invade,
The rulers, chiefly wishing not to seem afraid,
With admirable schemes of reformation press,
But only as to peace exhibit earnestness.
For there are zealous persons who, to raise the throng,
Would valiantly o'ercome and remedy each wrong,
Thus to the cautious and discerning, sharply say:—
"Far less regard to customs antiquated pay;
When honest subjects seek to snatch at boundless good,
What will so benefit as a determined mood?
Teach virtues, gain advantage e'er for lower folk,
Swiftly the best that is in humankind evoke!

Ewis depends," they cry, " on qualities of all,
Especially the workers ; summon spirit, fall
More actively on ills which lie thick strewn around !
'Twill be a policy sagacious, sure of ground,
To lay all heavy burdens on the general State ! "
And so 'tis come about, even a kind of hate,
Between the more contented highly-placed, exists,
And numerous, less strong, but brave antagonists.
Still, ever open conflict has advanced this race
Much exercised in mind that each should know his place,
E'er aiming at contentment's future benefit ;
Suspicious of a lively many-sided wit,
Oft humorously moved and yet in manner shy,
Desirous, once a week, conscience to pacify.
The man of Ewis, seeking vague immortal light,
Yet proves the soul can stir perversely in its flight ;
Requires to hear condemned, in utterances loud,
Such heretics as basely distrust have avowed ;
Ay, one, to rest the saints, e'en of a God dared tell
Loving to view the lost in agonies of hell.
Ever the priesthood teach, a Godhead just and great
Allowed the fall of man, who merits thus a fate
Of torment ending not, albeit awhile ago
The Deity, become compassionate, could show
A wish to save the lost. Wherefore, who strict believe
Dogmas ecclesiastic readily receive
Assurance comforting. Indifferent yet are some,
Maintaining silence, breathe as to opinions dumb ;
And all well know, 'tis crime with rudeness to blaspheme
So, shrewdly they avoid law's penalty extreme.
Meanwhile, through faith the land has gained advantage sound,
Preachers beneficent a way to good have found.

Treasure 'mongst Anglo-Saxons made amends for wrong;
And the financial mood stays with Ewisians strong,
Who find conveniently that gold can compensate,
Cure broken head or heart, trespass minute or great;
While the transgressor poor must otherwise requite
Through his persistent labour far from others' sight.
Truly, for wealth this people ever eager yearn,
Showing for science, art and letters less concern,
So they more readily submit to commerce' yoke,
Keep to well-trodden paths nor custom oft revoke.
Gravely the senators will eloquence display,
Loving to hear their voices, well the truth convey;
Then strangely haste to vote scarcely as they desire,
But as the leader wishes, or the chiefs require;
Ay, each must laud his headmen, ne'er the virtues doubt
Of measures likeliest opponents swift to rout.
Nor, having gold, escapes he marks of excellence,
Whenever generous, lacks not a recompense,
For freely those in power title and star bestow
On rich supporters having heart and mind aglow,
Whereby sagaciously high sway is fortified,
And partisans secure new triumphs for their side.
Still, if the people guess, or partly grow acquaint
With secrets should be hid, learn poverty hath taint;
Possessing shrewdness, ne'er desist they long from toil,
But live well satisfied the best should win the spoil,
Earn fortunes honourably, maintain due wont and rule,
Successive generations unto progress school.

But leave this little isle (where many have been free
To let the soul advance and strive for liberty)
Examine other records! Can the eye discern
Principles, general laws, that should attention earn?

THE SPIRIT OF HISTORY

WAR

Though motive for a battle scarce arise,
Valiant and zealous warriors must speed,
Sorrow for women, little children, breed
With arms approved of folk in such things wise.
Soon foemen mingle, anxious to chastise:
All are enthralled with comrades to succeed,
Steadfast endure, for king and nation bleed,
Laughing at hardship, crown their enterprise!
Stupendous sign of wrath, ferocious power,
Revealing hideous projects, single aim;
Mighty to harass, mar, despoil and maim,
Athirst to see the true and noble cower;
Monster! forego thy long and wretched hour!
As men, at last rebellious, shall exclaim.

THE SPIRIT OF HISTORY

Who would ambitious fathom history's secret laws,
Discerns an obstacle shall give him frequent pause;
Since ever doubts, that on the slightest actions wait,
Surer and larger grow when deeds are complicate.
Thus is it difficult at causes true to guess
Amid the host of problems every act oppress;
While, if perplexing reasons late events forerun,
How much the more foreran they what was ancient done?

I

E'er, mighty situations in the memory last,
Invite and force attention to a wondrous past;
Thus, by insurgent Nile, a changeless priesthood ruled,
The patient fellahin to due obedience schooled;
High intellect and art in Greece were paramount,
Of wide stability displayed them not the fount;
The Roman's energy gave Earth a newer life,
Founded prosperity 'midst slavery and strife.
Then rose a Holy Church, e'er zealous for the soul,
And, binding Christendom, arrived at high control;
Still, left serfs miserable for brutal lords to chide,
Denied to man the right of thinking, in her pride.
Next kings grew powerful, o'ercoming feudal chiefs,
Sought to be absolute and brought incessant griefs;

So, last, a suffering folk contrived to ease the load,
Advanced on Gallic soil to a humaner code.
Clear seem such happenings, important past compare;
Of a stupendous whole remain a tiny share!
For strange immensity, unmarred by break or slip,
Marks the unending course of men's relationship.
Having wide ancestry (different for almost each)
From whose authority none is beyond the reach;
Man spreads upon the Earth, though various yet shows
A common character; he simple passions knows,
And others intricate; if subjected to change
In circumstance around, e'er stays within the range
Of Nature's suzerainty, who now with force severe,
And now with genial smiles that fail not to endear,
Sees to it, he shall bend unto her precepts strong,
Go forward with his task of sifting right from wrong
In life's experiment.
At times, with vehemence
Some are impelled to act, inducing great events;
Since there is tendency, approaching unto law,
For men to break from ills, correct each serious flaw,
Obstructions overcome. They show a weakness vast,
Yet on the side of progress would their influence cast,
And struggling frequently 'gainst obstacles as met,
Perceive themselves in growing opposition set;
Then, by an awful custom seen in crises, still,
Linking together can uprise and foemen kill,
In fury hideous stab, pistol with sudden aim;
Or, giving greater thought to honourable fame,
March to the battle-field, deploy, in order drawn
Contend nerve-wreckingly, maybe again at dawn,

With shell and bullet tear, and fiercely resolute
Raise, till the arm is weak, the sabre in pursuit.
How far betwixt a leader, joying in alarms
And every thrill of war, who must appeal to arms,
And an enthusiast true that patiently has sought
The certain consummation of a lofty thought!
One would ambitiously inflict on men his sway,
The other hazard much, but an ideal obey.
So, fear of rivalry and hope of greater power
Stay not alone the agents history shape and dower;
Communities have felt a zealous force within,
Aiming advantages first peacefully to win;
But whatsoever passions bring about events,
Abstractions of a kind exert sure influence.

II

What hidden governance to mould man's past should dare,
Of subtle thought prepense, his destiny prepare?
Shrewd factors e'er precede occurrences and creeds,
Active conditions will occasion pregnant deeds,
And reasons a great force and frequency possess,
So it were laudable this fancy to express;—
A spirit complex and yet definite doth live,
To things historic aimeth dignity to give;
Ever hath found, and findeth, a congenial home
Alike 'mongst strong and weak, the still and those would roam,
The while its potency and doings are controlled
By laws profound, exact and vast and manifold.

III

The subtle spirit which to history grants its life,
Of nature just, requires causation shall be rife;

Shaken by frequent doubt, inspires mankind to test
Whether the state of things existent is the best;
E'er restless, asks for change, seeks an occurrence new,
Nor otherwise will bring the startling page to view;
Being to reason, thought, sympathy sensitive,
Must oft to high desire a rapt attention give.
Such thesis to maintain, and thereupon enlarge,
Sure 'tis enough with which a gentle muse to charge!

IV

Though to define a cause will hesitation breed,
Causation, of a sort, must each event precede.
Who can deny, a force, from time to time, appears,
With marks indelible, man's history deeply sears?
A Xerxes dares o'ermuch, Themistocles is bold,
Cæsar has crossed the stream, Luther must views unfold,
Rousseau uplifts his voice; can any live in doubt,
Different the world were now, had it stayed these without?
Thus antecedents to some consequents have led,
And if for similar derivatives far spread
Adduced are other reasons, several or a score,
'Tis surer made thereby that causes go before!
Ripe influences favour every act and thought
Which to the cognisance of any mind are brought.
Each individual, too, within the balance throws
Through 'heritance, a mass which ever heavier grows;
And always, though its might could scarcely well be weighed,
Great actions have the personality obeyed;
For deeds of every man, ere taking their full course,
Feel both the spur without him, and his inner force.

Though life is, truly, but a long contending whole,
A war of energy seeking to gain control,
Natheless, despite confusion, reasons might be found
For all the happenings in history's maze abound.
If causes are complete they ne'er resultants lack;
Chance can no more arise than magic white or black!
E'en when the lots are drawn with wonted care, aright,
Again laws natural their subtle powers recite.
A change, as in a nerve cell's size, nutrition, shape,
Alters a battle-field, precludes the foe's escape:
Every coincidence, strange, unexampled, weird,
By forces Cosmic and unalterable is reared.

V

Often perplexity has helped the sure advance
Of those who earnestly man's welfare would enhance,
For doubt brings questioning and, maybe, then reform,
After a struggle brief or dread historic storm.
Who deems an ancient custom is not e'er the best,
And long-accepted views would energetic test;
Who launches efforts bold in search of what is true,
Rejecting now the false, now venturing on the new;
Shows, as he follows a perturbing upward course,
Perplexity and doubt provide a saving force.
Slowly came laggard knowledge, hasted not to cheer!
Worse, error, like a fiend, injuring man's career,
Left him, at times, a sad and nerveless fatalist,
Determined Heaven's ruling no way to resist!
But hatred falls upon, displeasure sore awaits
One that mislikes the past, too close interrogates,
Wherefore great Socrates must go serene to death,
And a late Persian prophet tortured drew his breath:

The Báb, who clear progressive revelation saw
In Moses' and Christ's teaching and Mahomet's law.
Daring ambitiously on fingers slow to count,
Even poor savages had bias to surmount :
The first who notched a stake, cut strokes upon a wall,
Aroused the fearful thought, harm might the tribe befall !
Likewise, they braved remonstrance who foretold each moon,
The Pleiades' approach, sweet summer's certain boon,
Encountered wrath because they ignorance would leaven,
Or sought to alter views concerning hell and heaven.

VI

Groping in horrid gloom, 'mongst deities of stone,
Now man with bloody rites attempted to atone ;
Next held, his gods must live a higher kind of men,
Perceived at last, a God surpassing human ken.
Still valorous, a few proclaimed, dissatisfied ;—
Merely abstractions can in Deity reside ;
Said some, an Absolute, unknowable, exists,
Behind phenomena in manner strange persists ;
Or cried, appearance is a figment of the mind !
Deemed, culture has a right to hold a creed refined.
Then some, in no way by such metaphysic caught,
Asking a simpler creed, audacious in their thought,
Decided, matter with attendant energy
Has always been, and never well shall cease to be ;
Through vast inherent laws transcending space and time,
Can mould the Universe to beauty's shape sublime.
Much doubt and bravery unto mankind could give
Progress from fetishism to a faith positive !

VII

So doubt's insurgency on every path has shed
A stimulating light, to shrewd advances led;
For, after hesitation, often just and sound,
Enquiry is upheld, and notions new gain ground.
The reasoners who, first, are long impelled to think,
Unto themselves may others then successful link;
Until in time arrives a man of nature bold,
Determined to be rid, forthwith, of methods old,
Able to conquer, through example, spoken word
Or written argument. Or, sudden has occurred
An aggravation bringing evils to a point
Urging the multitude to strive in manner joint;
Driving and maddening those on danger do not dwell,
Who, all aglow themselves, in weaker ones compel
A bearing resolute. Thus shall arise events,
Through questioning which spurs to act with vehemence.

VIII

Revolt, thy name alone would awful pages fill!
Lingering not, the brave at last their blood could spill,
Turning to violence, man's origin betrayed,
Even of old, when war was ne'er religion-made.
Upon barbaric souls, what so confers delight
As an infuriate struggle and death-dealing fight?
E'er it has thrilled to raise aloft a vigorous arm,
Maintain a just defence 'neath virtuous alarm:
And nations ne'er have lacked the need-in-chief of strife,
A willingness to die when seeking life for life.
Ere bigots, keen of purpose, could all Earth dismay
With worse than carnage of Bartholomew's sad day,
A Prince of Orange, learning crafty Philip's plan,
Throughout the Netherlands, to slaughter every man

Of the faith Protestant, aloud no thought revealed,
But trembled, swore the wounds of sufferers should be
healed.
And when the Spaniards dire his patience had exhaust,
With fervour stretched the rack, joyed in the holocaust;
Silent no more, he rose, headed resistance till
He freed the land, heroic conquered a vile ill;
Loving his people, saved them, all oppression broke,
In honour passed beneath a fell assassin's stroke!
Can insurrection just yet fail of such success,
Alas! distribute widely grief, worse bitterness!

IX

Eternal variation over history sways,
Whose spirit readily the unforeseen obeys;
And, as hot solar beams advantages oft bring
Other than those at once from wonted radiance spring,
So, a momentous change may show a late effect,
Distribute benefits of a sort indirect;
As when a parliament, that Stuart Kings expelled,
Developed puissance never afterward withheld;
Or a French soldiery, who beyond Ocean fought,
Returning to their land, a taste for freedom brought.
Scarcely advance of knowledge or an altered use
Escapes a hidden power fresh changes to produce:
When mediæval sailors showed that Earth is round,
Thereby they injured Rome's authority profound;
While later, an affront, of pious scruples born,
Wrought till all Hindustan by mutiny was torn.
Who knew the laws of change could shape futurity,
Relieve our present ills, solve many a mystery!
Yet would he surely find predictions unfulfilled,
And insufficient basis whereupon to build;

For, oft the complex of interpretation fails,
And disability incessantly prevails.
And yet, it feeds ambition, makes the pulses leap,
To search for order in the old historic deep!
Behold, a few would seek an underlying cause
Of import general: sincere in love of laws,
Perhaps through eagerness mistakenly survey,
Deem a force transitory exerts perpetual sway;
As, if large States divide or smaller integrate,
One, in his zeal, may then an error perpetrate,
Say, laws have caused such lands to break apart or blend,
Whereas, 'twas simple pride the step could recommend.

X

Exists a scheme in change and variation's force,
For sure remoulding man in his advancing course?
Seeks tireless Nature types e'er different to breed,
So that dissimilar from similar proceed?
Compare some goodly heroes, early with more late:
Fail, at the first, the old our minds to captivate;
Once strangely Agamemnon Artemis would please,
With a fell sacrifice the goddess chaste appease!
When at the last, Achilles left his tent awhile,
Far dragged he Hector's corse, so spent his anger vile!
How Earth for mighty Ajax sudden lost her charms!
Who brooded, slew himself, being balked of hoped-for arms!
Vanished barbaric chiefs and their romantic gloom;
Must warriors civilised, forthwith, in history loom!
Miltiades with aid of townsmen struck his blow,
Used trusty patriots against the host below;

And staunch Leonidas showed virtue beyond price,
Guarding with friends a pass, enthroned self-sacrifice;
Too, shone forth genius vast, as Alexander proved,
Who, last, by Persia's sea to Babylonia moved:
Advanced had man and warfare in an epoch's course,
Appeared devotion, novel military resource!
Early, Christ's faith to men a mystic comfort gave,
Rewarded troubled souls with life beyond the grave;
And then the pious from simplicity retired,
Soon a diversity of calling fresh acquired,
Till hermits came and monks, and the good parish priest
Who, in an epoch dark, from mists of doubt released;
And great ecclesiastics wedded dogmas new,
Rose to important places, honour could ensue;
And flourished learned scholars, schoolmen shrewd, intense,
Determined to discuss with dialectic sense.
Arises not a trend from simple forms and plain
To variation and departure from the main?

XI

If currents ne'er have ceased, and order is abused,
Still, seems an ebb and flow in life's results confused;
How many an ancient Empire, with its rise and fall,
The path toward unity or rupture will recall!
Ambition or experience speeds a union new,
But all can sunder after integration true.
Beyond or nigh the castled Rhine-stream's stately tide,
Where hardy tribes the martial Romans oft defied,
A Holy Empire rose, that reached from north to south,
Past fertile hill and vale to many a river's mouth;

Yet, lacking wholesome union and a general aim,
Much liable to strife's entanglement became.
Masterly lived the princes, who with separate rule,
Loved melody, yet direly would their subjects school.
Where Walter Vogelweide carolled sweetest lays
Of passion, chivalry, a noble lady's praise;
And Meistersinger Sachs fashioned a frequent flower
Homely, but scented with a brave dramatic power;
Unwelded, different States seemed destined to submit
To custom antiquate, laws harsh or e'en unfit.
Yet Dürer, Vischer wrought, and craftsmen waxing skilled
In cities numerous delightedly fulfilled
The purposes of art, while honourable trade
Of merchants strenuous prosperity conveyed.
Then simple peasants, stirred by preachers of reform,
Must from their faith depart, and, pricked by impulse warm
Toward social liberty, old feudal grandeur wreck;
Grim devastate, nor rest until they know such check
As makes them stare aghast; when heard are endless sighs,
And only desolation meets sad aching eyes!
'Twas not enough; again, the land, for creeds being rent,
Dreaded the camp, the field, marauders violent;
Since princes, wishing dogmas for mankind to choose,
Against each other warred, while country-folk must lose,
Though captains fame acquired, as Wallenstein who last
Ill-fated ready made his lot with foes to cast.

So divers States where Siegfried's valour had been sung,
Groaned desperate, with hearts by pious quarrels wrung;
Joyed finally to think, when came Westphalia's peace,
Potentates, for awhile, to vex with arms might cease.
But Frenchmen, to win glory, Germans must subdue;
Wrathful perceived a Frederick sudden spring to view
Raising his people's hopes almost within an hour,
Bringing a unit fresh to Europe's balanced power!
Then toiled souls resolute for Rhineland's sure renown,
Ambition-spurred, desired with poesy to crown
A land no longer weak. Lauding a Monarch great,
They must their native tongue enrich and cultivate,
Stir patriots with song enthusiasm to feel,
With drama's force endeavour rifted States to heal,
Or inspiration for a sacred epic claim,
Or at a picture of man's steady progress aim:
Gleim, Lessing, Klopstock, Herder! Triumphs such as yours
Splendidly mark a lull in everlasting wars!
Shone forth still bolder minds who classic rules disdained,
Unto a summit of unfettered wit attained,
As Schiller, ripe pourtrayer of the noble-souled,
Allied with soaring Goethe, thinker manifold.
Yet, than pure sentiment and thought, was needed more,
Rhineland to fortify against the scourge of war,
Wretchedness due to presence of armed reckless hosts;
As after Jena's field, a foreign victor's boasts,

At whose command, it happed, poor German youths were swept
To Moscow, 'scaping flames, in snows unwaking slept!
And, amid warriors true, one grew than all more firm,
That, e'en at cost of slaughter, must be set a term
To the destroyer's reign. Stern Blucher braved his task,
Could, despite Ligny's effort, weary soldiers ask,
Steeling their souls, to step forward and forward yet,
Rouse till the peace-disturber's lurid sun should set!
Dauntless responding, they successfully arrive,
Valorous aid the staunch of island breed who strive
To free a trembling world. No more o'er Rhineland's soil
Mere glory-seekers pour the helpless to despoil
And patriots confound.
And at a favouring hour,
Kant's influence and Fichte's well can further flower,
Incite to quest of truth, and love of thought intense,
Culture of thoroughness and search for evidence:
What time a method strictest seemed in all things good,
Submission unto rulers a chief virtue stood.
Dazzles the quality of brightly burning zeal
In all things undertaken! It can force reveal,
Oftentime marks the folk who now great Wagner bore,
Composer-playwright of a type ne'er seen before;
Now must the valiant, learned Haeckel stimulate
His thought on Cosmic force and Man to concentrate;
Now spurs a statesman strong, blest with imperious will,
That would about him hopes of Unity instil.
O'er long had Schleswig-Holstein been to Denmark bound,
And Hapsburgs, Hohenzollerns met on distant ground,

Victors to grow, then rivals : whence, in contest fierce,
The single eagle strove the double's heart to pierce.
Still, Bismarck, resting not, moulds Rhineland's destiny,
Nor quails before a deed his force of mind shall try
Soon to the uttermost : desires to face a foe
Has often loomed an agent of his country's woe,
A neighbour loving not this sudden German might
And hurrying to prove the brave in war delight !
'Tis common danger doth resistance wide induce,
And Moltke, strategist fortunate in the use
Of triple armies staunch, led those that battled well,
Whether from Brandenburg or Baden, elsewhere, fell,
Or, spite the desperate charge of Gravelotte, survived,
'Scaping the greedy toll of bloody Worth, contrived
To force, on Sedan's field, surrender of a host
Of warriors brought low, surrounded at their post ;
At last could end a siege ; 'neath Paris' lofty arch
With proud and swinging step in jubilation march !
Gleams as law's symbol, now, a German Emperor
Aiding free intercourse, preparedness for war ;
Teaching the value of activity and might,
Upholding virtues can the Fatherland unite !

XII

But, through unwieldiness, a State shall break apart,
Or from such separate ills as struck at Rome's stout heart :
How many are the rulers Tiber's city sings :—
Kings, consuls, imperators, Holy Fathers, kings !
And smaller institutions, move they from the plain
Unto the complicate, to alter then again ?

Now, has Crime's penalty been uniformly death,
Now, through diversity, allowed a lighter breath;
For jurists eagerly the laws must multiply,
Or, just as zealously, incline to unify.
And in affairs of soul, things spiritual and creeds,
Varying differences distinguish human needs:
Whence from a parent, rival churches have begun,
Or offspring, growing kind, decided to be one.
So, many a dialect may win attention scant,
Till this or that, in time, becomes predominant;
Meanwhile, both here and there, expressions fresh are born,
Insistent strength display, a special place adorn.
Move all things thus apart, and tend they to unite
By rhythmic tendencies eternal as the light?
A joy in letters, science, art must prove its power
With frequent force from when it first began to flower,
Even in Nileland's sensuous enervating clime
Could victories renew through dim and far-off time!
A culture that nigh vanished, dreaded to unfold,
Has in new epochs flourished, almost uncontrolled.
Oft-time society which yielded, then would rise
By a brave spirit urged the world to civilise;
Striven have princes by past failures undeterred,
Awhile succeeded, clearly made their motives heard;
And if the strong, o'ercome, sank backward at the last,
Others arose were seeming for the headship cast.
Now rules supremacy, now threatens an eclipse
In man's development and wide relationships;
E'en alternating fashions can the mind direct,
Those of a present age scarcely the next affect!
How liberty of woman Egypt pleased and Rome,
Though Hellas, Saxon Britain kept her in the home;

More, a fresh vogue can sway in love made manifest,
By Cavaliers encouraged, Puritans suppressed ;
Ay, in the sacredness of marriage as a yoke
Immutable, or bond for many to revoke !

XIII

Inertia, 'tis a force of universal range :
E'er custom militates against a taste for change,
Nay, the experience of every day inspires
With faith, 'tis well to think and act as did one's sires ;
And each is subject to a force of country, spot,
Making his first ideas not easily forgot.
For Nature casts on all, from birth, a potent spell
Over the thoughts and fancies, notions will compel
Letting a bond of union, certain link be seen
Simplest religions and environment between.
Who hints his origin, by love of every glade
And shallow murmuring brook beneath the pleasant shade,
Or by incessant fear of such harsh elements
As, lashing them to rage, seem void of pity's sense :
Man, that now ever wins o'er Nature larger power,
Lived, sorely long, restrained, has cursed his primal hour.
For he was abject once, shrank from each stirring leaf,
Vaunted nor marriage law, nor guidance of a chief.
While could or pestilence or tempest all oppress,
Or gorges gloomy frown, Earth seem a wilderness,
The timorous perceived the stubborn wrath of God,
In superstition's maze inextricable trod ;
Gazing at torrid deserts, storms on mountains wild,
Deemed Heaven ne'er could be to creatures reconciled
Who ever subtly thought a go-between to seek,
Cowered in spirit and, despairing, showed them weak,

So, grieved by dubiousness of sunshine, wind and rain,
The tillers of the ground and toilers on the main
Shall feel in part disposed, like the more primitive,
To credit certain gods maliciously can live
Venting on man their spite. But in the larger town,
With little to affright them, and a chance to drown
Their qualms with merriment, men face serene each task,
Grow callous, less inclined protection high to ask!

XIV

But, with the benefit of intermediary priests,
Came holy sacraments, observances and feasts;
And sprang, nigh through the world, the pious shrewd device,
Of warding Heavenly wrath by means of sacrifice.
Death of a god sustains, as late deemed Hindu Khonds,
Who chose a Meriah youth, and held him in soft bonds,
Saw in his life strange virtue, worshipping, then slew,
Hoping his scattered flesh would cornfields sure renew;
Ay, that such offering could the Earth-goddess bind
To favour more than hillmen, even all mankind!
A god will call for gifts, as taught the Aztecs stern
That anciently, afar, could a religion learn
Disseminating love, meekness and due restraint,
Yet, with a ruthless passion making men acquaint;
Whose god of war, alas! ever athirst for blood,
Required no trickling stream, but cataracts at flood,
When priests the victim bound, with flinty knives must rob
From the torn breast the heart ere it had ceased to throb.

Sating grim appetite, desired a vast World-Soul
A single luckless male, beauteous, unblemished, whole
A winter's offering, whose limbs were roast devoured
By princes diligent with godhead to be dowered.
But of the sacrificed the essence, form and mien
Knew a successor, for the marvel must be seen,
E'er heard on earth and touched. Yet 'twas a cult allied
To a morality that deprecated pride,
Ordered confession, priestly absolution, sure
Charity to the maimed and succour of the poor!
And far from Mexico, in mountainous Peru,
Where reigned the gentle Inca whom Pizarro slew,
How gods were dominant! To taste the sacred bread,
There asked a pious folk; communion with a dread
Sun-Father chastening: nor were the babes forgot,
On whom baptismal rites conferred a blissful lot.
Alike arose ideas must mystically flower
In Egypt, Persia, Greece, where Cordilleras tower;
Yet oft a broken temple, ruined convent's shade
Implies e'en choicest blossoms in their time shall fade.

XV

Amidst brutality and everlasting strife,
How should ideals advance, take certain root in life?
Armed with superior traits, the ruler shines more strong,
Can aim successfully to remedy each wrong:
Great Nature chooses well, prefers of men a sort
Favourable toward her plan efficiency to court!

'Tis Alfred forms a kingdom, misery allays,
Saint Louis proves for France a source of brighter days;
And as such unto effort others oft persuade,
Teaching the worth of honour, virtue as an aid,
So the amenable to thoughts of loftiness,
Zealously, now and then, their fellows can impress.
But surely moral sense must even beasts engage:
They suffer for their young! Thus, at an early stage,
Our ancestors agreed to bravery's demand,
For family or tribe, would valiantly withstand.
Too, wonted rites, and marriage, and the wholesome rule
Of the sagacious old permitted not to cool
Ideas primitive of useful right and wrong;
Whence the community acknowledged chieftains strong.
Could fear of odium fail the shameless to deter?
Retaliation homeward drove its ready spur!
Rose ever thus, apart from sympathy, a cause
Why men should love the right and seek to gain applause.
Besides, an influence held, with all, from old to young;—
It happened often those in whom pure feelings sprung,
Escaped mischances sore, as Nature wished the true
And finest to succeed. 'Twas they successful grew
Who by their fellows were acknowledged to have might,
For minds of sterling sort irradiate a light!
Even it came to pass, from anarchy more free,
In time man pondered what his neighbour's right should be.

XVI

Then after, here and there, a moral law arose,
Some in authority dared stricter ways propose;
Seeking the happiness alike of one and all,
Would codes for betterment on tables clear instal.
And so, through Erin's isle dreading no Romans stern,
The folk from poet-lawyers wisdom sought to learn;
As too in ancient Gaul, judges Druidic dwelt
That tested doubtful deeds, forth simple justice dealt.
But, who should dare examine eagerly the laws
Since Hammurabi's hour, ne'er having need to pause
Could surely demonstrate how men, swift borne along,
Oft altering their thought, ameliorated wrong;
Curtailed the penalties marking the savage state,
Inclined to leniency when dealing with the great;
Truly were ever stirred by jealousy for good,
If they equality but partly understood:
Justinian, Draco, Solon, Moses, one and all,
Napoleon even, a desire for right recall!

XVII

E'en if prime energies, wants, passions, sway man's fate,
Subtler dynamic e'er must history dominate;
Changes and conflicts caused by forms of high desire
Will bring about events, nor readily so tire.
As ancient palaces of ruined Cnossos prove,
Which fell and yet allowed that Greeks should onward move;
As culture by Pizarro and dire Cortes found,
And progress independent of our older ground,

Tell of conditions certain, native, wide and far,
Conferring power to strive and duller methods mar;
E'er, after many a lapse, though failure shall be rife,
Civilisation new will surely spring to life.
How hopes of every man, his thoughts and interests, views,
Can others stimulate and love, or hate infuse!
And ever happenings great are due to this, in part;—
Men are assured that all should treasure up in heart
Their perfect remedies; e'en, of transcendent will,
Some would through dint of force their principles instil!
Thus the more resolute the breath of history wake,
Commanding prominence in life's arena take.
Consider but the story of a single spot
Where strong adventurers dominion ne'er forgot;—

XVIII

A league from Dinant's high embattled precipice,
Stands forth a lonely crag, which travellers oft miss.
Meanders noiselessly, amid the limestone vast,
A stream nigh hid, beneath, as in dim ages past;
And caverns, near at hand, give signs a savage race
Clambered among the hills, chose here a resting place.
The days, the months, the years, the centuries sped by
While the enchanting glade still saw men live and die,
Was destined to behold Celtic inhabitants
That, up and down the vale, as owners turned their glance;

Till Romans, conquerors shrewd, built here a frowning
camp,
Wherefore the caverns, soon, re-echoed to the tramp
Of legions disciplined. Then valiant Franks arrived,
And Charlemagne, who state imperial revived.
Drew hither Charles renowned of Burgundy, the
bold
And merciless in act when foes should be controlled;
Once, from a neighbouring bridge, into the flood down-
hurled
Burghers in hundreds brave, that lips in scorn had
curled.
Here glittered that fifth Charles whose son was
bigot worst
Of Spanish kings for blood of heretics athirst;
And 'neath the very place where cave-men long had
dwelt,
Tragic Napoleon rode to plains whereon must melt
His power magnificent. From humblest to most
proud!
Nigh might the watchful stone amazement tell aloud!

XIX

But a will masterful if wed to ignorance
Disdainful, oversure, on error oft shall chance;
As, when, in Scripture's page (where science is omit)
Our ancestors perceived directions scarcely writ;
Read in a vacant look a warrant for the scourge
Wherewith a demon sprite from the insane to purge;
Or, treasuring the text which had a witch described
As far too vile for life, the hideous creed imbibed,
Then, driving from their minds all horror and despair,
Long agony out dealt, held anguish not their care.

Wretched, alas! grew wont, faith in a savage law
That summoned multitudes within its ravening maw;
Considered innocents had trafficked with the fiend,
If but their whispered names 'neath torture could be gleaned.
But, e'en to-day, high-minded roam in Eastern lands
Oft the fanatical with blood upon their hands!
Swift toppled mighty Spain (holding the power enshrined
Of priests who triumphs rare for bigotry designed)
That drave forth heretics or slew the thrifty Moor;
Ruined her industries and left the country poor!
How suffered the Low Countries under Philip's lash,
A good and pious monarch of assurance rash!
Though where throbbed Alva's proudest nether-millstone heart,
Arose the gorgeous Rubens fecund to impart
Balm to still gaping wounds, through an ecstatic skill
Displayed the joy of life and force of human will;
Limning resplendently salvation's scheme divine,
But demonstrating man can rise by effort fine.

XX

If fixity of soul, determination strange,
The mood o'er-vigorous, has caused historic change;
Another trait affects, should human worth enhance
Howe'er society or knowledge may advance;
That disregard for self, the which to win a cause
Will pay a penalty and ne'er a moment pause,
In actions seeming glorious, even death incur;
Such quality men's hearts shall sway and deeply stir.

In dauntless bravery, thirst for the battle din,
O'ermastering desire the victory to win,
Who rivals Charles the Swede? E'en Monarch when a boy,
But scarcely more, he viewed Danes, Russians, Poles deploy
Their forces resolute. Yet, at sea gaining aid,
Soon upon solid earth, unhelped the stripling made
All his oppressors fly. From near to distant field,
Hastened the youthful hero so that foemen reeled!
Ah, few in conquests fresh for ever shall delight;
And he that loved campaigns deplored Pultowa's fight,
Even by neighbouring Turks was into durance cast,
Then, knowing hair's-breadth 'scapes, at home arrived at last.
Ambitious, restless e'er, the martial autocrat,
Too briefly on his throne quiet and chafing sat;
Who, needing still of years a pair to make a score,
Had shown himself a match, in the great art of war,
For many enemies. Strange schemes allured the brain
Of one would Norway worst, England the proud constrain.
Stirred by which purposes, he cried with Russia peace,
Agreeing Baltic shores to stay his own should cease,
But first must siege a town: a passing enterprise
Which brought him within sight of keen and hostile eyes;
Whereon he strove no more, because the leaden ball
Of a Norwegian marksman made him swiftly fall.

Spartan in fortitude, of energy immense,
Blemished by one foul deed, had gone the warrior hence
Who well revealed a virile attribute of mind,
Even the valorous skill can magnetise mankind.
Ever of cheerful bearing, unadorned in dress
And moving soldiers' hearts almost to tenderness,
He so down-weighed his land that, from her lofty rank,
By her king's prowess all exhausted, soon she sank.

XXI

Caught by no nipping frost of sternly ordered rule,
Man, in a pristine state, displayed him seldom cool
In temper and desire; could scarcely far advance
Till came a social growth and with it governance.
Widely 'twas recognised within the mind's deep womb,
Anarchy proves of strivings worthiest the tomb;
Whence duty was apportioned, sovereignship begun,
Truly, a mighty help to deeds historic won.
Monarch and humble liege! connection often dread
That bitterness provoked, to bloody doings led,
Occasions caused, alas! startling and manifold
Of vengeance furious and passions uncontrolled,
Aroused disputes unending as to mutual wrong
Or settlement of rights, with subjects waxing strong.
And progress of a folk e'er mirrored in their king,
Of whom men spake with awe, subserviently might sing,
Giving slight thought to troubles stubborn and obscure,
As hardships which the common people might endure!
If ventured scribes to comment, they must acquiesce,
Ne'er a discordant topic on a monarch press,

Ever of overlords the need was widely owned,
Whose paramountcy proud by effort has atoned
For weakness or defect; and princes mostly hate
Their lieges should a wish for independence sate!
Strict is the ruler bound, and answerable is each
While censure, lessened fame will even tyrants reach;
Thus, if a king exists with might surpassing all
High unto heaven to rise, low into hell to fall;
Of ease in its extreme he surely lives bereft,
Requires to show him thoughtful, cautious, subtly deft.
Disposed to hold the creed whatever is, is best,
At times, or here or there, he helped reforms unpressed,
Yet found his task not light, nor finds it so to-day,
When, through staunch ministers, he wields a milder sway:
Ne'er more, like Sweden's King, can fearful wrath reveal
Sending a vassal false to linger on the wheel!
But lieges once prepared, advancing with a bound,
To gain, through breathless struggles, a superior ground;
Escape an era harsh (before improvement's morn)
That Peter iron-willed and Catherine lewd adorn
And direful Frederick; when most, despising tears,
Scorned the reformers whose humanity endears.
Ah, many a country felt the discipline of blood
Till an insurgent people, in tempestuous flood,
Down bore opponents all, facing disasters vast,
Rescued their stricken land from ills, a gloomy past.
For Frenchmen, in their woe, recalling moods displayed
By courts and courtesans resplendently arrayed,

Showed them awhile insensate, honour could disgrace;
Still, for improvement true a time ensured and place.

XXII

But, in a distant country blest with sturdy folk,
A lesser ill sufficed to break an ancient yoke;
Goaded a loyal race, by Ocean broad removed,
Into democracy, as almost was behooved;
Since it arrives that offspring, spurred by natural fate,
Oft wish, as speed the years, from sires to separate.
Such as have tasted deep the bliss of liberty,
Unfavourably consider any harsh decree,
And Britons, who depart beyond their island home,
Maintain a zest for freedom, e'en if far they roam,
Make it no grudging care of their regard to sing,
Cry lustily the lineage whence 'twas theirs to spring.
Ever a hard-won boon possesses triple worth,
And independence shines the best of things on earth;
While sovereigns may be foolish, lightly look upon
True valiant lieges and but value them when gone.
Who fled for conscience' sake the rigours of our land,
Searching America, found an enchanted strand,
Of virgin richness and for ancient aches a cure,
A gift designed afresh toward goodness to allure,
Liberal of reward, showing a gracious face
To bold descendants of a stern yet sterling race:
Where long the red man strayed, joyed now the white in dreams,
Passionate loved the prairies, forests, dells and streams.

XXIII

With traits illustrious and worth impressive sung,
Of old, heroic Romans sagely schooled the young;
Whence influences zealous, speedy taking root
In a soil favourable, begat a wondrous fruit;
So is Columbia surely debted to a chief
Standing apart in high and ever clear relief.

At a spot pleasant, nigh Potomac's broadening shores,
Virginia bare a son whom every State adores;
Since Washington thence issued, that has worship won
For conduct in the senate, deeds in battle done.

Loving the benefits a kind Earth-mother yields,
He spends his early years in measuring the fields,
Still, at an age imperfect, otherwise grows famed,
Being the leader of defensive forces named
Against dark enemies. Quake once his men in fear,
Whereon he rides his steed swift whither bullets near
An end can make of him, even to death would go,
Can an unruffled front and dauntless spirit show
To make the fearful brave.

Not fast his might matures,
The while, in prosperous peace, he public life abjures
Till in him British acts provoke a wish devout,
Taxation to withstand. Ne'er Washington feels doubt,
Would upon sternest war's arbitrament insist,
Gleams by the congress chosen foremost on the list
Of captains for the fight. Intrepid, resolute,
Joining to loftiness fine qualities acute,
When Lexington is o'er he gains supreme command;
Welcomes occasions oft to let his soul expand,
Develops statesmanship, can overcome by skill
As well as fortitude, trust in himself instil.

Renowned already when the port of Boston falls,
He strengthens with each impact, and at last enthrals
His grateful countrymen. Facing dire wretchedness
'Midst snows of Valley Forge, he next meets greater stress,
A traitor's sudden flight; but wins a French ally
Of nature chivalrous; soon can in triumph cry,
The days of strife are o'er! Last, as a mentor wise,
Helps he the birth of laws; in highest honour dies;
Who was sustainer of a splendid noble part,
Supreme in war and peace, ay, in his country's heart.
Thus was an infant nation into freedom born
While a majestic mother learnt her loss to mourn!

XXIV

Now others toiled the ship of governance to launch,
A constitution build as oaken timbers staunch,
Until there came about a novel custom bold;—
All were elected who men's destinies controlled.
Forthwith, a people strong a rich land overran,
Announced as an ideal, equality of man;
And, recognising not a far-off feudal past,
Themselves delivered thus;—the individual is cast
In shape nor dominant nor yet subordinate,
Has an inherent right by effort to create;
Can, for his own advantage, use all lawful powers,
Since, clear o'er everything, the plea of manhood towers.
And to a test exact was put this haughty creed,
Arose the rarest chance for a consummate deed,
Because, as if to prove that Earth can genius rear
Remote and solitary, in circumstance severe;

A danger menacing o'erwhelmingly the land
Attained a late relief through one would ills withstand.
Deserves he honour surest who in throes intense
Succours with valour constant, keen intelligence;
Is, by his countrymen, named pilot for the shoal
And quicksand critical; e'er longing in his soul
To share dear liberty, must other men release,
Wills, despite every cost, to make injustice cease.
Little are men obedient, if for wealth alarmed,
By a magician potent need then to be charmed
Who can insist upon the signs of coming light,
While yet alert of soul to vindicate the right.

XXV

As a great pine inured to storms and frosty air,
Abraham Lincoln throve of softness scarce aware,
For, in a wilderness such as primeval stood,
He felt vicissitudes even to want of food;
Lacking tuition's aid, advanced by heed and thought,
Was to sagacity by stubborn conflict brought.
Emerging into life, the lad was sorely moved
Seeing dark fellow men suffer as law approved;
Wherefore, arose a task quick to the pitying eyes
Of one nigh weak as they whom men did most despise.
But he must battle long, know many a struggle hard,
Discover that success to merit may be barred.
The sturdy frontierman could forest timber split
But found a merchant's life unsuited to his wit;
Would seek o'er anxiously true justice should be done,
Showed him beneficent, desire for wealth had none.
And, when ere long he chose the calling of the law,
Granted he foes all virtues in their case he saw,

Joined a fine equity with insight deep and clear,
A power of rhetoric that moulded his career.
'Midst strife political, of a great good he dreamed,
E'er for conciliation's blessing zealous schemed,
Untiringly through life, held to the maxim sage,
A statesman can the worst but gradually assuage.
Of genial subtlety, however he might aim,
Masterly Lincoln would not soon his plan proclaim,
Balanced, with knowledge sound, adversaries' lack of love,
Deemed, wisdom calls not, alway, swift to cast the glove.
And when on fearful woe, at last, the land arrives,
Before a breathless world, he steadfastly contrives
To guide, exhort, uplift, yet never act in haste,
Nor to lose heart nor cry:—forthwith the foe shall taste
Extreme of punishment. So men trust ceaseless gave,
Viewed in their President the bravest of the brave,
Inspired with tenderness, love, charity toward all;
Resolute, flinching not, though fate could ask his fall!

XXVI

Ends a third century since Pilgrim Fathers bold
Hardships in Plymouth found of grievous hunger, cold,
Then through survivors' valour, staunchness of the breed,
Difficulties o'ercame, met every growing need,
Unearthed resources richest, likely to endure
And broader happiness for worthy souls procure.
Has ever man in this, or past, auspicious age,
Succeeded to a grander varying heritage?

Still on wide shores arrive the strong of many a race,
Yielding to Anglo-Saxons mostly pride of place,
Steadily mingle with the seed of pioneers,
Stand forth unwearied meritorious compeers ;
Share in the peopling late and sound development
Of a stupendous, thirsting, glorious continent.
E'er, since the early struggle and refractory task
Claimed efforts positive (for Nature much could ask),
Continuously striving, men advancing far,
O'ercame the obstacles their eager step would bar.
And yet anigh the waves of Massachusetts' bay,
The Puritans a spirit sternest must display,
Harass supporters of a light divine within,
Nor smile on crazy dames suspect of witchcraft's sin !
But folk of Boston knew the worth of liberty,
Shone in the struggle from a far control would free ;
Spake early for the slave ; and turned to such high thought
As for the sage or gifted is with comfort fraught
And subtle benefit.
Toiling on every side,
The settler would for new prosperity provide,
Scorned perils of the worst. Where Dutchmen brave had bled,
Driving forth Iroquois ; and Hudson keen, instead
Of scouring northern seas, first on his river gazed ;
Slowly New York began, that has the world amazed,
Become a home for those attuned to wealth's pursuit,
Teeming with wondrous force of citizens acute ;
As port of entrance gleams a link with older lands,
Ever attention of the nations sure commands.
Alive with various works and forms of industry,
A Quaker-planted city fame wins zealously ;

But numerous are the haunts of man, nigh stream and shore,
Viewing him actively collect a valued store
Of needed sustenance, or gather what is best
Of natural source, adapt and use it, to be blest.
And in a land that sees a people closely knit,
By forceful traits; men deeply joy in treasure writ
Depicting a brief past, renewed and fortified
By scribes have loved their country, sung her praise with pride.
Displaying graphic talent, patriotic hope,
The care and strength that aim with mighty things to cope,
Bancroft the constitution's sage formation told.
And Cooper, recking of adventure, action bold
Amidst the rolling prairies, stilly forests dark,
On Ocean fresh, succeeded, asking men should hark
Unto the voice of one would charm them with his roll
Of sailors, soldiers, hunters, redmen great of soul;
Hawthorne, a chaste, austere revealer of the pain
Shall follow sin, could make the past to rise again;
Longfellow, pleasant guide to Dante's lofty song,
In rhythmic utterance skilled, narration short or long,
Gleamed in pathetic idyll, epic, Indian lore,
Recalled the puritans and courtship's days of yore.
High-soaring Emerson would mystic comfort give,
E'er must a worshipper of culture, thoughtful live;
While Poe, musician choice, whose every note must please,
In brief and weirdest tales, nigh made the blood to freeze.
And then again an author of experience ripe
Painted, with cunning humour, folk of frontier type:

Clemens, the chronicler of youth's resourceful skill,
Laughing philosopher of honest, virile will,
Ensample of indwellers, in our later time,
Maturing to the needs of country, epoch, clime.
And earnestly, where men thus throng, some would improve
The social way and life, toward perfection move;
Forsaking ne'er advance and effort unsurpassed
And struggles long; can pause, attentive glances cast
On problems that affect well-being of a folk
Able, as ne'er before, good fortune to invoke.

XXVII

Columbia, the great, would e'er enlarge her view,
Surveys with confidence, or smiles upon, the new;
A prodigy is she! unmatched has been her lot!
An infant Hercules, writhing in anger hot,
This youthful giantess, aroused to righteous strife
Late caused an old-world foe beaten to beg for life.
Youngest of nations all, perchance to grow their chief,
Her course miraculous astounds, if yet 'tis brief;
Whose very size excites, while the air stimulates
Her sons to vigorous toil, and virgin wealth creates
A wide prosperity, so dominates that all
Looking around discern vistas phenomenal.
There men hate idleness, from pride of birth appeal,
Love talents that bring gold: will sate their hearts' ideal,
Letting colossal force of trusts conferring might
Depend upon the will of those who sway the fight.
And in a life of gain ever advantage weighs!
Whence can exist a throng, which soon or later pays

By peace of mind impaired for a desire extreme
To win, by wagering, the summit of their dream.
More, grimmest poverty, can oftentime oppress;
Since, among folk with much, the many who have less
Suffer through price and cost advanced to please a few
That self aggrandizement and selfish schemes pursue.
Amidst a race possessed of independent mind,
Ready for any task but energies to bind,
Still can equality a disadvantage bring,
Cause a mild tyranny where is no Czar or King,
As when publicity stretches so far a hand,
'Tis difficult its prying effort to withstand.
Here, gentle woman famous for a grace her own,
Wont to attract, lives nigh upraised upon a throne;
Intelligent and frank, is like to captivate
And yet, may find herself ill suited in her mate;
Whereon, the god of love sighing capriciously
Oft, with a compact fresh, asserts his potency.
Despite the land is rich in souls heroical,
Lavishing time and gold in effort to lift all;
Corruption's horrid shape can into daylight creep,
Even stir lookers-on to smile when they should weep.
But, among divers peoples in such area vast,
How should all swift escape from every error past?
The strong, in border States, for due respect will yearn,
Helpful, and warm of heart and joyous, growing stern,
Threatened with insolence, can show them pitiless,
In face of peril lapse to moods of lawlessness.
This folk, whose mind is ruled by plans of mighty scope,
Will e'en discover oft in novel creeds a hope;
Steadfast endeavour on worn doctrines to improve,
Fear not toward new positions vigorously to move.

Thus some are satisfied to rest in pleasant doubt,
Harmonious disagree, all bigotry without;
Daring to hold that each deserves eternal bliss,
Consider dogma but a choice hypothesis.
So, while around are seen ardour and diligence,
Often is offered, to the thoughtful, evidence
That qualities can change, and mind's complexion old
Tends to assume a hue not easily foretold.

XXVIII

Triumphing over Nature, men have prospered here!
As, shrinking not from hardship, obstacle severe,
Repeating, day by day, with valorous intent
A march o'er treeless prairies, plains to silence lent,
Scorning the threat of death, they fortunate arrive
At a spot favourable wherein at last to thrive.
As, once explorers journeying, ever keen of look,
The roving buffalo, or mountain deer o'ertook;
Reached southward dismal creeks, where alligators hide,
Yet further, planted gardens worthiest of pride;
Lingered near date and fig, orange and lemon grove,
Where climbing vines against the tall magnolia strove;
Or, otherwhere, amid the swamp's unblest domain,
Ordered thralls dark of skin to strip the sugar-cane:
So they, in herds and cornfields, find reward for toil;
Lured by romance men win ore golden, silvery spoil,
Love well the camp, the ranche; or to the city haste;
Can solitary ponder, or joys social taste;
Esteem advantages of a life primitive
Or unto complex customs full approval give.
Verily, pleasures of a lonely mood are far
From one 'midst buildings high, on foot or clanging
car,

Shows himself dutiful 'neath barter's endless reign,
Attunes his mind to speed, a prey to thought of gain!
Now, wondrous and surprising grow man's days and hours,
Helped by diversity of new mechanic powers;
So he peruses world-wide latest news at cost
Less than he oft has careless to a beggar tossed;
At will, holds ready converse with his friends afar,
Views swiftness, size exultant, space a 'minished bar;
Stays in a ceaseless whirling stream of human force,
Yet, skilful and with ease, directs his constant course.
Dauntless, throughout the land, men put forth energy,
Advancing, would rule all, and fashion destiny,
While giant trees in secret mark the flight of time,
And torrents slowly carve vast Cañons' height sublime,
While silent, pine-clad Sierras, snowy Rockies gaze,
Niagara thunders with the waters that amaze,
Onward the mighty flood of Mississippi pours,
Ever persistent Oceans beat on distant shores!

Spirit of history! restless, avid of fresh truth,
O'erleaping steadily, the promise of thy youth;
Seeming unsated with past triumphs, strangely bold
And yet serene, still aimest wonders to unfold!

o o

HIGH DESIRE

IDEALS

What hour is felt a darkness as of night,
Anxious to view and love a cause supreme,
Men knowing all the poignance of a dream,
Low bend before a soft and radiant light.
Uplifted, lifting to a lofty height,
Sacred forthwith attracts a chosen theme,
Draws ravished souls that tireless, joyous scheme,
Unto a neighbouring haven e'er in sight.
Or goodness' cult, science, or letters, art,
Shall prove a boon to pilgrims as they plod
The varied path forefathers endless trod;
Often a rule of right can sway the heart;
But in thought highest, purest, having part,
Demanding, craving more, some speak of God.

HIGH DESIRE

I

Or in smooth vales beneath hoar summits of bright
snow,
By lonely shores, on hills, or where huge cities know
Throngs feverishly striving to outdo the past,
Wherever on the earth man's struggling lot is cast,
Amazement at his nature, origin and power
Never can cease to stir his contemplative hour:
Who oftentime has wished to reach such lofty height
Of transcendental thought and spiritual delight
As, almost to attain, must prove a task severe
Reserved for wistful souls, minds mystical, austere.
E'er multitudes are buoyed by hope of paradise,
While sorrowing priests repeat the solemn sacrifice,
And pastors earnestly for swift contrition plead,
Helping their fellows, would instil a pious creed.

II

Long past in small Assisi, one so true arose
The birds became his friends, ay, wolves were no more
foes;
For, with a zealous love, he all God's creatures eyed,
This pious Francis making poverty his bride!
Who travelled, even far, to lands where peril throve,
Or, nearer, e'er intent 'mongst wretchedness must rove,
Preaching humility, praising self-sacrifice,
And causing other men to offer Heaven's price,

Still shines a kindly beacon radiant on a sea
Where threat sheer rocks of anguish, dark calamity!
So, many another wrought in every sort of clime
And not the least a healer of our recent time;
For one who boldly taught a fear of future flames
Won by a noble zeal a triumph for his aims;
Speaking of danger ever, judgment imminent,
Summoned forthwith the sad and outcast to repent;
Arousing penitence 'midst terror-stricken sighs,
Adjured through honest toil from misery to rise.
Unto salvation's hope the sick at heart should cling!
Good William Booth thus stirred recruits with joy to sing
And left a mighty army mourning him at last,
When, with dimmed sight and bent, their aged general passed.

III

If some for high desire the purest outlet find
Or in religion, or the service of mankind;
A part, of humble aim, merely their lives would raise
Well satisfied to seek out wise and moral ways,
Finding it is enough from wrong to sift the right,
Avoid a downfall in their own and others' sight.
Oft ethic codes acquire authority divine,
Since many folk ideals within God's name enshrine;
But morals, having flowered from sympathy and sense,
And slowly sprung to view, in course of time immense;
Coming to greater force and eager to protect,
Would against private woes sound barriers erect.
Yet, howsoever sound the wish that agitates,
Self-interest, as of yore, wide action dominates;

Prudence on rashness wars, coldness 'gainst feelings strong,
'Twixt which the middle course but seldom can be wrong.
Thus anxious breasts are swayed by oft-recurring strife,
And tumult yet remains the bane of human life.
To most, sufficiency gleams highest of all laws,
Abundance has more weight than national applause;
Scarce vision heavenlier with rapture such can fill
Than one of food, roof, raiment: comfort, if fate will.
Now, a fresh purpose shrewd, through contest to be gained,
Has ever dazzled men! and some have much attained,
Nay, even far advanced to certain power and ease,
Through opportunity the spoil near by to seize
At times of settlement. There are, who being adroit,
Favoured of wont and laws, can toilers' force exploit,
Wealthier grow while linger still conditions rude;
Or, when, from time to time, imposts should be renewed,
The rich and poor alike fresh benefits would reap;
Or, short of gain, at least, present advantage keep.
But some, with feelings soft and active intellect,
Consider it their task, crass evils to correct;
Denounce with eloquence, facile their fellows move,
Teach doctrines maybe that of vast importance prove.
Thus, with attention earned, opinion new is formed;
Even a stronghold shall in course of time be stormed.

IV

Foremost apostle of the creed that all should own
Full guerdon of their toil, and none unhonoured groan;
Wrathful that they, who golden talismans provide
For struggling labour weak the necessary guide,
Should grasp the generous share; Karl Marx by doughty blows
Advanced the workers' cause; forthwith, created foes
Among the highly placed. But on this Prussian went,
Was oft a guest unloved; e'er grew the more intent
To rouse a sounder sense of simple labour's right,
Loud trumpet far and near:—behold, at last, the light!
And Marx had mastered much, searched deep for every cause
Playing a potent part in wealth-producing laws;
Assigned himself as task, earnest and clear to show:—
Events in industry steadily onward flow:
Huge enterprises wax and goods become more cheap,
But toilers benefit nor reap as they should reap.
The ebb and flow of work makes man-supply o'er great;
Drives wages down: on most inflicts a servile state.
Defensive bands of workers therefore organise,
But see the scanty rich vast wealth monopolise.
At last, all capital falls into mighty hands,
In lieu of masters few, the State all toil commands!
'Twas but the zealous thought of one that dwelt among,
Together sought to bind, craftsmen of many a tongue
'Gainst force of gathered gold. Successful he was not,
To fortune no-way came, yet raised the workers' lot;

This man of ardent views, who daring-ever gave
Valour and impetus to such as look to save
Toilers from present woes, a better reign desire,
When all for all shall strive and none to wealth aspire
Extreme, unlimited! In lands of broadest range
So comes a deep unrest, a hope of social change.
Yet, is it perilous man's energies to bind!
Undreamed conditions new display them oft unkind;
And many a cautious nature asks that not o'er-soon
Untested means be used to win a mighty boon;
Would, in momentous things, employ a wary wit,
Dreading a path untried may somehow prove unfit.

V

Helpers of men arise as stars to show the way,
Instil a needful hope and minimise dismay;
To whom it shall attraction all-sufficient prove
Benefits to secure and detriment remove,
Maintain the general good. Thus to ameliorate,
Demanding not applause, has early been and late
Chosen of finest souls; such tirelessly have striven,
If learning that oft slow acknowledgment is given;
Yet finding something great, than recognition more
Able to satisfy than fame or praise or store.
And now, exists a gentle humanising mood,
Upsprings a tendency, aiming at wider good,
Concessions to distribute, for past wrongs atone,
Acknowledge rights for all, not rich nor strong alone.
So, meritoriously oft saviours practical,
Hostile to evils, would stem mishaps which befall
Toilers industrious, who tardy e'er to rise,
Prove competent and worthy in a life that tries

Endurance to the full. All honour such deserve
As watch their country's pulse, improve its vigour, nerve,
Fanning prosperity, are ready with reform
To meet the social peril, economic storm:
Statesmen the worthiest, whole-heartedly who strive
And join in endless battle that their land may thrive!

VI

Upon life's pilgrimage, oppressed by depths of care,
Recking rebelliously happiness to prepare,
Some rudely would destroy; confident they could change
The outlook of the throng; with force of habit strange,
Find curiously the cause of ills is tyranny,
In districts communal a blessed life foresee!
Alas! inheritance but slowly is forgot,
For sure no demigod could cure each hapless lot.

A few would private riches set 'neath State control,
Lure all the wealth amassed unto the common goal
Of public benefit. Too, has been known a scheme
Making the bond of labour through the lands supreme.

Meanwhile the principle of common action grows,
And folk co-operate for welfare, oft propose
For manhood wider powers, so that the timid shrink,
Cry, it must come about society will sink,
Intelligence adjures to honour proven worth,
Discretion true attends large heritage, high birth;
And, now, wise privilege approaches dismal night!

Still, bolder souls conceive (aiming to read aright),
That hazards yet are small, say none can good compel,
Or gauge how plans shall end, the last result foretell.
Long, doubtless, it must happen, as the people rise,
They will advantages well hold before their eyes,

Allow not sentiment activities to mar,
Nor acquiescence old from valour to debar.
E'er will fresh citizens with vigour struggle o'er
Many a problem sires have wished to solve before :—
How far should liberty extend her trusty creed?
Or sink, for general good, at times her urgent need?
Should doughty ones submit if those attaining power
Ruthlessly undertake to make opponents cower?
And how shall each requite the State's protecting care?
Or gain, who helps the realm prosperity to share?
How much should public riches aid the broken, weak?
Questionings similar attention must bespeak
While griefs, as yet unknown, will lessen coming joy,
Harass and stimulate; huge energies employ.
But, as to right and wrong, act sound or mischievous,
Full long have men admired discussion strenuous,
Upholders stern of force wielded a horrid sway,
While milder folk humane pursued an anxious way!
Unequal is advance; as witness womanhood,
Here, mounts a stately throne, there, does as man thinks good.
Different are moral codes distinguishing the climes,
So faiths and honour's vogue take colour from the times;
E'en now where law is lax, protection's effort small,
'Tis little on one's fellows murderously to fall!
How lingered the strange age when one might many own;
Nay, pangs of slavedom vile awoke a pitying groan
E'en lately 'mongst the great, where some complacently
A portion of their race could view as property!

VII

In the vast country boasting Rurik's ancient name,
Where Dmitri valorous the Tartar hordes o'ercame,
And Ivan terrible evoked a kingdom strong,
And warlike Tsars successive, perpetrating wrong,
Could moujiks oft enserf, as Peter did, the bold;
Where famous empresses to lovers were not cold;
South of the mighty Kremlin's cupolas and domes,
But north of rolling steppes where Cossacks have their homes,
Breathed Leo Tolstoi first, and sensitive of mood,
Repressing animation, lonely stayed, must brood.
A noble strange he seemed, since, from his wayward youth,
He oft-time was perturbed by longings for the truth,
And gave but little heed to social rules adroit,
The way of careless life folk fashionable exploit;
So, happier became when bravely bearing arms
At far Sebastopol; then yielding to the charms
Of an art's exercise, drew an analysis
Of past experience, hate, love and prejudice,
Or limned drear scenes around in startling colours fresh
But all things vivified entering into the mesh
Of his mind diligent. To peasants dull and gross
Upon his large estate he turned attention close;
Setting from serfdom free, must in a school preside,
Despite e'er gentleness forbad that he should chide.
Active he showed him in adjustment of their state,
When, far and wide, the thralls became emancipate;
Since ever in this man by many things distressed,
Sympathy blossomed forth and aided folk oppressed.

Weaving romances, Tolstoi, with consummate art,
Triumphant reached the mind, touched to its depths the heart;
Well choosing details, gave to figures life and voice,
And soon with ethic purpose made his soul rejoice.
At empty social wont he levelled arrows fierce,
Thus could the false and sinful, predatory, pierce;
Still, understood to draw the traits to him were dear,
Depict a hero of a noble life sincere.
And Anna Kárenín! 'twas love and kindliness
Set Tolstoi for thy fault punishment to assess;
So, Kútusoff! his wish to lessen war's vast fame,
Made him reflect upon thy generalship's high name;
Measure the weight of chance, bring common troops to view,
Show where the merit oft of victory is due.
Soared at the last this Russian, potent as a seer
Revealed his inner gospel, mocking every fear;
Scoffed at ill consequence, in a land liking not
That wont and ways accept should boldly be forgot.
Took he mild Christ as guide transcendent for all good,
And said, no evil-doers should be harsh withstood;
Declared, upon a Christian harm could ne'er descend;
'Tis wrong to raise the hand one's safety to defend;
Nor any should swear oaths, confer on magnates power
To hurl their armies forth in a pernicious hour.
Many an ill he traced to supercilious rage;
Held, toil should not one's own, but others' need assuage.
Nor dogma is becoming, nor the mystic state,
But ever simple love should conduct animate;

And it were well to live, if may be, passion free,
Shun the seductive, seek a mild tranquillity!
The prophet humbly with the awl or harrow wrought,
Unto the needy gave, as freely as he taught;
Scorning delights, would much for simple folk endure,
Renounce all worldliness, refinements e'er abjure.
Seemed it imperative, zealously he should tell
Of reform's urgency; that little here is well.
Guessed he not, self-effacement and submission crude
Would surely favour chaos; disadvantage shrewd!
Still, the soul's utterance sad of one sought heights supreme
Made softer consciences, provoked anew to dream;
Must to an effort fresh his sluggish fellows move,
Arouse a frequent wish, life more ideal shall prove.
Here was a mind deep stirred, that brooding upon fate,
Pondered on virtue, duty, God and evil, hate!

VIII

How many are the blest with true and lofty gifts
Whose tireless energy the race of man uplifts!
Some thinkers and observers ever serious muse,
Careful and worthily disseminate their views;
As wise historians, ascend the judgment seat;
Or, after deep research, weigh customs obsolete;
Or, taking languages, show several are as one;
Or peer in atoms small, interrogate the Sun!
Nor should lack gratitude for students' splendid toil,
Who, slow collecting seed, digging and delving soil,
Garner but to divide, each to his own pursuit
A devotee or slave, plucking the ripest fruit

Reached by an outstretched hand, that would affix a seal
But to discoveries a merit high reveal.
If some want judgment rare, or faculty profound
(For limitations ever human powers bound)
The erudite or lettered, who new flights essay,
Are potent to assist man on his rugged way;
As scholars diligent, can varied treasure find,
Perpetuate the worth of ardour of the mind!
Sages of every land, whom learning's thought could thrill,
Loftily you obeyed the mighty Cosmic will!

IX

But rises other glow, is felt a different thirst;—
Even the patriotism by cynic scoffers curst,
Which would withstand aggression, ward off common wrong,
Seeks to regain the rights to every folk belong.
Since days when China's sage newly accused the woes
Wherewith hard destiny contentment can oppose,
As due to absence of a proper kindliness;
Bravely the good have aimed ill treatment to repress,
Which must, albeit, endure until the traits are lost
Spurring us each to gain at one another's cost.
'Tis natural enough to smile at others' tears,
When interests of our own run counter to their fears,
And next to cast about for a convenient tale
And virtuous support, lest weakness should assail,
Induce the heart to melt. Which doubtless was the way
When slaves were borne o'erseas under a pious sway;
At sound of marriage bells, the woman's utmost dower
Passed from the captive's clasp into her husband's power;

Or when the puny child, at growing commerce' calls,
Earned a wage pitiful within drear factory walls;
Or, when to free the State of those the State had bred,
Disreputables oft were to the gallows sped.
'Tis wont decides until a voice unusual speaks,
When, suddenly, the throng a true conversion seeks;
Or, one a strange and novel formula provides,
That, first successful, next perchance to evil guides;
For man is fallible, can miss the plainest lights,
Sink to the lowest depths when aiming for the heights.
But it may come, a people linger wretched, thralled,
Cherishing little hope, by foreign bondage galled;
Whereon, if patiently, some tyranny endure,
Others at any cost desire to gain a cure.
They face disasters, woes; sweet pleasures cast away,
Struggle for remedies the likeliest to allay
A cursed dominance; intent on good supreme,
Measure their lives as naught, must realise their dream!

X

What vivid hopes and fears stir, agitate the mind
E'er of Mazzini as, like a tempestuous wind,
He gradual sways, uproots the parasitic foes
And captors of his land; as he defiance throws,
Till, Italy being one, he joyfully can sink
Weary at her dear feet and freedom's nectar drink!
In darkest days of hated Austrian influence
O'er petty States corrupt, years of harsh violence
(While yet, a thorn to patriots, with temporal power
Vicars of Christ held Rome as their especial dower)
Joseph Mazzini, youth of Genoa the old,
Is moved by deepest wrongs to show him overbold

In quest of liberty. But in the prison cell
He moulds his principles; determines he will tell
His brethren and the world a wondrous moral law:—
Should nation join with nation, man with man, nor flaw
Nor blemish could remain! Naught for humanity so soon
New progress would ensure as comradeship's sweet boon!
He must arouse the people, arm them, justice seek,
So, freed, dares much, implores his king to lead the weak,
Great Italy unite! Told is he, curt, to fly,
But, hidden, manages in a near port to lie;
The while, gleams frequently ripe passion in the eyes
Of one who, no more frank, is plotting in disguise,
And meditating war. In a Swiss town with friends,
He labours ceaselessly, safe emissaries sends
To scour his native land, and well adapt the ground,
For, in the hour of need, the faithful must abound!
Behold, a refugee, he slaves for a small wage
In London's sombre air; where, fervent to assuage
Compatriots' misery, toward night, his gifts are free
Who educates poor lads, more wretched ay, than he.
Meanwhile in Italy, the strife is well sustained
By such as tireless scheme, ere long have progress gained.
In fateful forty-eight, Novara spells defeat;
Driven from snowy slopes, Mazzini's men retreat;
Yet Rome awakes, at last, and he who pined so long,
Triumvir is proclaimed by a vast civic throng!
Still, alien bayonets assist an ancient Church,
The hero force to yield; haggard, once more to search

For sanctuary afar. Whence steadily he fans
Year after year, the flame; sees constant trip his plans,
Until from Sicily, the red-shirts setting sail,
To Naples come; forthwith against their foes prevail.
Meanwhile diplomacy, with skill constructs a throne
On which a warrior mounts, holding it for his own.
Now the republican that thrice was ordered death,
Honoured, in Pisa draws a last and placid breath,
And thousands awestruck weep for one that had begun
Their battle, striven long till unity was won:
To whom it shone a law and prime necessity
To drive oppressors forth and make his nation free!

XI

But, e'en if rulers prove them able to survive
Who harsh and tyrannous against their subjects strive,
Mostly the great recoil from action over hard;
Evincing generally for goodness some regard,
Feel for their fellows pity, or a form of love,
Would, one way or another, guide to heights above.
Thus, ere the strong could think criminals to reform,
As when of old the blood-feud roused a frequent storm;
Or when, a chattel weak, carnal love's instrument,
Woman could scarcely hope to wax intelligent;
E'en when the Church and king together levied war,
Resolving heretics correctly should adore;
E'en when, 'twould seem to us, virtue arose apart,
Yet a high wish had place within the human heart!
For man, despite his faults, is not completely vile
However Satan fierce may lure with fearful wile!
Still, lingers such a devil? Late hath grown a doubt,
Rather, the valiant moderns live the thought without;

Though it appears, some hillmen, Allah that uphold,
Worship a serpent dark, nigh Nineveh the old;
Or praise the devil, as a peacock gorgeous-hued,
A fallen angel with creative might imbued!

XII

Ah, knowledge, soaring swiftly, vain belief defies,
Or, at the least, directs thither the critic's eyes.
And science that o'ercame, of late, resistance vast,
Long friendless, destitute, struggled against the blast
Of jealousy extreme in such as thought it good
To crush the daring mind, and all advance withstood;
E'en Science can appear the one thing of the Earth!
Some love to scan where stars from nebulae had birth
Ere the great Sun shone forth; or plumb the tropic tide,
Win treasures infinite, minute, which there abide;
Or, searching strata deep, summon to view strange forms
Of creatures singular embalmed by ancient storms;
Or subtle forces wield by keenly spying out
Pregnant affinities 'twixt atoms; stirred by rage devout,
Even thin ether rule! As far as minds can think,
They carry on research, nor from life's secrets shrink,
Candid avow them willing to reshape their views,
Will ne'er the latest gift of verity refuse!
Thus, it is given man, by methods strict, exact,
To prove, law bears on law and fact relates to fact;
Trials to make of Nature, essays that impart
Joys magical to mind since good therefrom may start.
When sickness clearly proved a wicked god fulfils
Sly schemes malevolent; cure of the body's ills
Fell to such priests as hoped, by adjurations strong
And ceremonies weird and prayer, they might prolong

Imperilled lives. Then strangest principles obscure
Ravaged the health, and asked special assistance sure
To meet each malady. Philosophy was quaint
When the physician toiled, attacking each complaint
As 'twere his object dear a fiend to exorcise,
Spider's thin oil or mole's blood, tongue of snake could prize!

Yet doctors sagest, skilled, for darkness past atone,
Now that the body's ways are more correctly known,
As how a comity of different organs toil,
And one's recalcitrance the other's efforts spoil;
And how, 'gainst hostile germs, the ever jealous blood
Employs defensive cells eager to stem a flood
Subtle and poisonous. Soon, in a happy reign,
Discoverers will flourish, sure renown attain,
Like Jenner rise, that dared a virus strange instil,
O'ercoming a fell blight. E'er, with determined will,
Bravely such science aims to rescue precious lives
As now from humble veins a potent cure derives,
Views from distracted orbs sad tears less frequent fall,
Less oft a dear child gasping, sink beyond recall!
So, offering up his life dire evil to o'erthrow,
Intrepid Finsen toiled, with light could quell a foe.

Nature is generous, if she be treated well,
Whom showing due respect, the surgeon can excel
(Helped by such lately-found and prized unconsciousness
As robs of hideous pain and makes all horror less)
In searching secret places, corners of the frame;
Embarking on new quests that skill and art proclaim.

In a dark future hour, if through their haste distraught,
Many become o'ertaxed, may then with careful thought

Mind-healers shrewd arising grant the suited balm,
Approve a simpler life, restore the needed calm!
Maintained Earth long her course before the vacant mind
And wild despair of madmen met with solace kind!
Even the wise were wont to mete out harshness vile,
Where now it is their way with softness to beguile,
Who fain successfully would vanquish or abate
The fury terrible, worse melancholy state
Of their afflicted fellows. How could high desire
Than in such sacred work a truer fame acquire,
Relieving grievous stress, lifting the helpless up,
Whom fate has overwhelmed with endless sorrow's cup?
Thus other vexing woes, continuous of birth,
Spur worshippers of science well to prove their worth,
Following one of France who has renown attained,
Surpassing victories o'er grimmest Nature gained.

XIII

A plague of parasites within man's blood has cost
Dear lives in myriads, which should no more be lost!
Then how more gratefully should any rhythmist sing
Than of the paladin a true relief could bring,
Great Pasteur, pure in soul, of purpose sharp, intense,
Conferring on the nations benefit immense?
Adherent of a calling which is wont to use
Scales, test-tubes, microscopes, of matter to win news;
He had a wish to learn the properties possessed
By crystals, hard and clear, which are at times expressed
From lees of wine; if subject unto special light,
Betray the influence as of a mould or blight.

Soon proved he, vinegar, like spirit charmed from grape,
But unto little plants of almost rounded shape
For puissance stays in debt, while germ-free is the juice
Of vines, as well the blood which healthy veins produce.
Forthwith, amazing all, assistance he devised
For industries which long the grape and hop have prized;
So when, in southern France, where richest silks are made
From golden shrouds in which small workers rest arrayed,
He was apprised the worms their ills could scarce survive;
Swiftly he guarded them and now once more they thrive!
Next rescues he, in turn, the peasants' feathered wealth,
Preserves their flocks and herds late shorn of pristine health
By germs maleficent: thin virus cultivates
And the imperilled beasts skilful inoculates.
Oft farmers sorely tried through handling impure pelt,
Acclaim his name that so with their affliction dealt!
Then, as a final stroke, he a fell evil cured
Which, with poor frenzied hounds, man lately here endured,
When piteous haggard looks, imploring, timorous,
And shuddering dread of water a calamitous
Sad end of life foreran. 'Twas Pasteur who could show
Such sufferings to redress; while others were not slow

Looking on open wounds, being informed, to save
Vast numbers otherwise had hurried to the grave.
Thus, toil magnificent ensured consummate fruit,
Once more for science won a triumph absolute.
And since his pregnant hour, which saw diminish first
The dread blood-poisonings so long mankind have curst;
Has sprung a likelihood full many a dire disease
Will vanish, or less wrath at human cost appease!
Untiring, without pause, oft 'gainst advice of friends,
He wrought a sure advantage other gifts transcends,
Showed 'tis a duty clear, man, a terrestrial guest,
Every phenomenon about him well should test,
Through widest precincts roam, free from all tyrants stern,
Seek Nature to o'ercome and ever zealous learn.
Nor reason is there why who Nature have explored,
Brooded upon the wonders which her realms afford,
Should not discuss unfettered, problems of man's fate,
Ay, on transcendent Cosmos, valiant meditate.

XIV

Remains a facile force and instrument in view
Ready to help mankind, and benefit ensue.
What shall than letters fine encourage goodness more?
Whose triumphs, victories, resound on every shore,
Since a tribe sensitive giving the world their best,
Deferring not to minds oft earnestly addressed;
Nay, stirred by righteous ardour well to treat each theme
That to themselves has glittered mighty or supreme

Have swayed responsive hearts, and brotherhoods so formed
Of souls by genius or ideas sincerest stormed
And taught surrender. Ripest force in words abides
If but the spirit gleam which over them presides!
Doubtless the printed leaf an author's soul betrays,
Reveals an inner truth within the booky maze.
And if historians' tales are sometimes incorrect,
At least their writers' art they faithfully reflect;
If often poets fail to reach the loftiest height,
They throw, despite their faults, on soft ambition light!
And moralists that utter maxims incomplete
Settle 'tis difficult of ethics well to treat;
While, if philosophers have shown themselves o'ersure,
They demonstrate man's craving wisdom to secure
Who tiring not has stored the witness, evidence,
In noble works of effort reaching eminence.
Thus, should not readily a student's labour cease
If ready to detect, cherish a masterpiece.
And as no future were, nor present without past,
So prudence says that each his eyes should backward cast
Unto the splendid dead departing laurel-wreathed,
Who to posterity writ wonders have bequeathed:
Thereby shall it occur man may the higher mount,
The better on a true continuous progress count;
Join many that for knowledge generous have striven,
Treasuring jewelled glories by the great were given!
Now, e'en the high may show, along with humours strange,
A total force defined, albeit of mighty range.
If energy which puissance mental can impart
Shall gentle feelings stir and animate the heart,

Then may divided interests oft endure through life,
Not openly appearing, cause an inner strife.
Should reason chiefly sway, pleasure will acquiesce,
What is of greater weight can set aside the less:
Strong Cæsar, freed from wildness, rivals must outleap,
And Newton calm the truth of gravity could reap.
But art or song may rule, amid soft dreams prevail,
Show what one does the best he will with rapture hail;
When, though first strivings, oft-time, prove but doubtful might,
At last a worthy offspring brings the world delight.
E'en Horace pondered ere the lyric feast was spread,
Deliberated, then sure admiration bred!
Still, swift or slow, each author gives the world at large
An earnest of his powers; partly at least must charge
The page with verity, for Nature him has lent
A soul on interests, or of man or things, intent.

XV

One in emotion joyed, art worshipped, knowledge prized,
His life by varied work consummate signalised,
True sage and singer, Goethe, viewed in thought a gem
Must ever glorious grace the spirit's diadem.
Maintains the well-born youth a presence nigh divine,
Inspiring in his friends the notion he must shine,
Whose father, wise and strict, of mental habit strong,
And mother, sharp of wit, gracious and hating wrong,

Cared dearly for a son disposed to sprightly glee,
Liberty unrestrained and sportive gaiety.
Nor lived he fancy-free, but felt delicious love
Forthdriving other thoughts, perchance of heaven above;
Since looking in fair eyes, the youth, foretasting bliss,
Let not at once escape the memory of each kiss,
Spied a choice citadel to stormed be and caressed
Oft in a gentle maiden's kindly, tender breast;
Yet, could he sadness know, on melancholy days
Peer at the far beyond, with gloomy mystic gaze!
With ardour desultory, soon Wolfgang studied law,
Glamour in many things, alchemy even, saw;
Remained by passion thralled and frequent verses wrote,
Told of his sufferings sore whenever beauty smote.
Then to the drama drawn, nobility he found
In Götz of iron hand, an ancient chief renowned;
Too, when beyond his hopes, fate a maid's sweetness moved,
He his intensity and sensitiveness proved,
Limned, with a simple fervour and nigh magic skill,
How an ecstatic sorrow could young Werther thrill.
Unto a station high raised by a duke's desire,
Goethe in Weimar, then, charms with his tuneful lyre;
'Midst an æsthetic court, romantically lives
In honoured comfort, and a wooded home that gives
On a stream beautiful. Long he the revels rules,
Serenely those around to greater wisdom schools,
Showing how man may rise; whose duty 'tis to learn,
Development of mind doth a rich guerdon earn.
Now, art securely swayed as sovereign o'er his soul;
Now, knowledge so bewitched, he panting wished the whole

Of learning might be his! . Views he in Nature God
Also made known in one has, late, Earth's surface trod,
Is ever privileged, discoveries to essay
Near as his own abode; far as the Milky Way!
Loving the shape of plants, the singer grew to read
How the leaf's harmonies in fruit and flower proceed;
Too, came to know that as, within its separate parts
New differences occur, a higher creature starts;
So, gazing on man's frame, he first a mark descried
Whose absence, long 'twas held, doth men from apes divide.
Yet poesy e'er more than science Goethe stirred,
Touched his soul jubilant, to ceaseless effort spurred,
Who must enraptured pen wild Mignon's matchless song,
And see the erl king spectral speed his child along;
Governing wondrous forces, swiftly could prevail
Alike in ballad, idyll, philosophic tale;
Transcending with, at last, Faust's tragedy which thrills
Every beholder's heart, with awe the listener fills,
Says, man may look for joy, claim sciences to know,
But never Nature's sway ambitiously o'erthrow!
Warm-hearted, charitable, blest with a loving wife;
A chancellor of State, as he was nigh through life,
Then passed away this bard, that surely did not err
Thinking his fellows from soul-languor to deter!

XVI

But culture's growth and offer of a worthy crown,
Even to humble minds which ask not for renown,
Sets up a newer bond uniting man and man;
Since interchange of thought through books can distance span,

Strengthen, as art or commerce, nations' intercourse,
A stimulus become, besides a softening force.
So beauty, subtle essence of things that attract,
Whether to Nature due or human thought or act,
Imperiously and far would precepts sound instil,
Longs to find devotees obedient to its will.
And art, o'er many minds exerting potent sway,
Charming and soothing oft, or rendering more gay,
Can forms and features of choice objects sure recall,
Add to the joys of life and pleasure nigh of all.
But, if the worshipper of Nature's lovelier mood,
Or e'en her phase austere, alter his attitude,
Not therefore will he lose. Imagination pure
Wide roving, wandering, may treasure rich secure ;
For brave ambition, with a cunning diligence,
Is able to enchant ; evincing crafty sense,
Becomes triumphant as through portals of the sight,
Reaches the heart of man with fresh developed might.

XVII

Amazes e'er his puissance that, with pencil fine,
Knows to arouse the thoughts in others' souls should shine,
Turns to his palette's stores and magic therein breathes,
Around a primal fancy newer concepts wreathes ;
Zealous for shadow, hue, light, form, at will conspires
To weave a masterpiece which no beholder tires.
Favoured how much is he can ardent pass his days
In a pursuit excites, his inmost nature sways ;

Though fortune frown, will scarcely from his purpose bend,
Forth to the world determines argosies to send!
So seemed it to a youth, that lifting not his voice,
Showed by his daily acts the life should prove his choice;
In gladdest Leyden dwelt, the freed from Spanish whips,
Thence watched a smooth expanse where passed slow sailing ships;
Was a rich miller's son, absorbed in every view
Of men and things, and such with ease precocious drew.
Ere long, from tutors' care, Rembrandt has freedom won
Nor loves tradition's weight, beauty's excess would shun;
Seeks, for the general eye, with pigments to translate
The thoughts and feelings that his soul intoxicate:
Descries as in his scope all can be given force,
E'en from a high priest's scorn and Judas' vast remorse
To an anatomist probing the human frame
Before rapt auditors; springs youthful so to fame.
Near a great city, woos, can thither bring to live
The artist a dear bride, the best to Saskia give:
Vouchsafing each delight, surround her neck with pearls,
Succeed till destiny toward destruction hurls,
Informing him:—who dares modes customary offend,
As retribution, moments horrible shall spend.
For high the painter lifts his art as on a throne,
Nor in submission will another's ruling own;
As when he should depict a marching company
That, asking portraiture, arrive and wrathful see

Almost a fairy scene: their leaders shining bright,
While to the day emerge followers as from night!
Sates Rembrandt e'er his tastes, having command of gold,
Artistic treasure gains impetuously bold;
Must for his folly reap at last unhappiness,
Learn that in hours of war, riches are valued less.
Alas! the once acclaimed could out of favour fall,
Lien-granting, grow a burdened, tireless, valiant thrall!
But, greater loss! he woke of Saskia bereaved,
Drew oft her haunting face; forthwith himself perceived
Desolate, though contented for his art to live,
On Nature pondering, to all things sensitive.
Thus, lingering in the fields, he scans each thrilling form,
Exults in noble trees, sunlight and threatening storm;
In lonely mood depicts the loftiest traits benign
Of Him whose influence on Earth appeared divine.
Now, stalled, the holy babe makes shepherds' features bright,
And now, the little group escapes in blackest night.
Sage, e'en in early years, beneficent and mild,
In a strange golden glow figures the wondrous child
Whose future steadfastly the painter's heart can win,
As when the peerless Christ forgives her life of sin
That kneeling, weeps and laves the Master's feet with tears;
Because she loved, is rescued from malicious sneers.
Erect, here, radiantly beside an open grave,
Divinity shows power from conqueror-death to save;

There, an encircling group of various sick can heal,
The halt, lame, visionless, all that affliction feel.
Is drawn a central cross, amid dire Cosmic gloom,
A figure frail, vile-tortured; sorrow at the tomb;
Then, in Emmaus, lone the risen one appears,
Startles a shrinking pair, deep awed, o'erwhelmed by fears.
Ever, as in the hour of previous cloudless calm,
The hapless painter seized on toil's all-bounteous balm;
Made ancient patriarchs adjuvant to a skill
That, lending it a settled purpose to fulfil,
Limned kindliness afresh! Abram screens Isaac's eyes,
But swift the angel speaks and none untimely dies!
Seeing the prodigal's surpassing woeful plight,
The father waits not long, shows mercy and delight!
And Rembrandt touched all life, the damsel's mind well knew,
The venerable dame's, the sad-faced hunted Jew;
Nor could ignore the claims of charm and loveliness
To live perpetuate, him must thereby confess
Artist, and very man. Ascetic being not,
Chanced he upon a maid who soothed his bitter lot,
Well for the Titan wrought, aided his loyal son,
Till last, both helpers passed: and Rembrandt's day was done!
Now shines his light again, for prejudice has melt,
As vanishes a mist through radiance surely felt.
Zealous for art, thus man had onward swiftly flown,
Founded a mighty province, poetry there sown;
Turned from the cult of beauty and austere ideal,
Less cared for sensuous thought than soul in nature real.

XVIII

And subtle hearing offers gracious avenues
For airy heavenly dream-visitors to choose,
Confers a privilege on one of eager mind,
As any that despairs because Earth's fetters bind,
In beauty's wondrous kingdom searches for reward,
Harbours a hope his high endeavour may afford
To other men, delight.
As, in its sure repose,
Impressive, chaste and varied, architecture rose;
And sculpture's effort for sublime embodiment
Stirred the imagination, spur to memory lent;
As painting's wider force conveyed a richer tale,
For there, less, limiting conditions could prevail;
As subtle poetry with measured rhythmic sound,
Emotion woke and thought, from lightest to profound;
So free and glorious music, scarcely bondage knew,
Wooing the spirit's self, o'ercame with magic true,
Incited humankind to loftier desire,
Endowed at times as if with transcendental fire!
Trumpets and cymbals served the needs of Israel's priests,
The lyre was struck at Hellas', as at Egypt's feasts;
So Tiber's city learnt, when saintly bishops ruled,
How, for the chaunt or hymn, sweet voices might be schooled.
Arrived the troubadour, earning forthwith repute
For songs of love and valour, aided by his lute;
Too, pious monks bestirred them, gave to Heaven praise,
As Guido of Arezzo who would music raise;
Bethought him to set down, on space or line, the note
When, for the chapel organ, dexterously he wrote.

And bravely talent took the bright direction new,
Through chorister and player near fresh triumphs drew,
Till the great Church a wondrous benefit obtained,
Lustre remarkable, when Palestrina reigned.
Foretelling what advance, the little virginal
Invited dainty fingers on its keys to fall,
Sweet maids to carol of the summer coming in,
Or how a gallant lover should a true heart win!
Nor music could conceive a mind to drama cold,
In opera, Psyche's story, Daphne's deftly told;
Ay, lured composers, zealous masters of their art,
To utter tunefully the longings of the heart;
Oft, generously well, inferior natures teach
With ordered vibrant tones that the soul's depths should reach.
And some have formed a very ministry of sound
Destined, as Bach and Mozart, ever to astound:
With force of thrilling notes ambitiously unite
The nations various, assuring through such might
Increase of common interests, feelings soft or gay,
Begot of reeds, strings, wind, exerting a strange sway.
How valiantly fine chords have won advance of late,
That soothe the harassed mind and growing woes abate!
But active genius oft-time registers a vow
'Twill find fresh harmonies, a wondrous art endow!
Beethoven! name revered, and nigh beyond compare
'Mongst those who sought delights ethereal to share
With folk less fortunate; truly thy splendid soul,
As a mellifluous angel's wistful would enrol

Mankind of every sort in choirs to grandeur wed!
E'en might arouse the throng, forsaking what is dead,
To worship jealously divinity ideal,
Discern in higher things a prize sufficient, real!
Did fate or heartless chance ever more blindly strike
Than against one whose mind in power and aim alike,
Soared so magnificent? For grew that godlike gift,
Which must advantage bring, almost to Heaven lift,
A facile avenue of hideous inner woe
Fastening upon a soul from torture free should go!
Came to him deafness from the jealous gods above
A fearful punishment for winning human love,
Falling upon a king and maker of sweet sound
Who could triumphant rise, as it were at a bound,
To loftiest realms of all? This Ludwig, being a son
Adopt of Austria's capital, there sees begun
And finished a life's toil. Pupil of Haydn great,
He gives his fancy rein, vigorous and elate
Devotes the hours to rendering each emotion vast,
Affecting, deep. His magic pen, transferring fast
Finest imaginings, a sure renown enhanced,
Through subtle sympathy, the sensitive entranced.
Ever the cultured taste with rapture must adore
One that devised the Solemn Mass and Léonore;
Noted rich symphonies, sonatas, at his will,
As if a listening world with gratitude to fill;
Ay, linked impassioned force to captivating strains
Of varied works profound: bestowed immortal gains!

XIX

How new seems music's charm beside the certain mood
Of venerable dread, a tendency to brood!

Doubtless in ancient times, wide to exist began
Schemes of relationship 'twixt hidden Powers and man;
Though vivid awe of fiends and sprites e'en yet can thrive,
As when a dusky maid shudders, condemned alive
To whet a monster's fangs, is nigh a stream made still
That crazy savages may purchase vile goodwill.
But fear, a chief emotion, often is well used
By priests who morals shape, would see sound thought diffused;
By rites, too, feelings of a mind are satisfied
That loves sublimity, can know luxurious pride:
So faith intense, the mystic story, soft appeal
Of costly cope and incense inner needs reveal;
While dark solemnity, fear, bliss, the chaunting slow,
The rapturous imploring hymn man's nature show.
Worshipped in Babylon, or on a Syrian shore,
Reigned deities could life abundantly restore;
Gods of fertility, whom autumn sere had slain,
Arrived in spring from hell, were wont to rise again.
But Persia, Egypt, India, as too, Greece, had each
A saviour that forgave and weary hearts could reach,
Afforded ghostly help, a cultured mode of thought;
Unto the dullard, boor, a simple fetish brought;
While last the East, faith's home, anew its force displayed,
Such a religion bore, it o'er the world has strayed!
What time Tiberius reigned, a city without flaw,
Ancient Damascus famed, a pregnant happening saw;—
Fell stricken to the ground a traveller drawing nigh.
Who a reproachful message gathered from on high.

'Twas Paul, a learned Jew, in rhetoric a power,
A Roman citizen that taught Christ's friends to cower,
Now grew assured he well in vision One had seen
Of lofty saintliness and noble speech and mien,
Knowing, of late, harsh death. In awe, he Christ adored,
With tireless passion sought such converts for his Lord
As joyously would keep the loving precepts grave
Of Him, from coming wrath, possessed the might to save.
Thus hear despondent souls of an atoning deed
Wondrous beyond compare! But that some too must heed
The like in other lands, ere Earth had grown so old,
Reveals, uneasiness could oft itself unfold
In timid minds confused. Such, guessing not that sin
Is part inheritance from brute ancestral kin,
Perceived in sacrifice, mystical and complete,
Solace for misery, a subtle comfort sweet.
The mightiest souls have built religions passing grand,
Sublimities of which have lost at common hand!
For radiant schemes before a dreamer's sight shall rise,
Which, near approached, recede as to the ground or skies:
Transcendency brought down, to many grows more real,
Unto their nature makes, then, a less slow appeal;
Yet loftiness must suffer, strained for common use,
Since the ideal and mundane scarcely can cry truce.
If, though an atom small in Cosmos infinite,
Man on a Final Cause, in judgment grave, will sit,

And then, he God define as that is held in awe
And to the loving mind appears without a flaw;
He sees on every side a never-ending whole
Unwilling to betray in full its mighty soul;
Whose secret force to ravel, tirelessly men strive,
Pleased as at every step they patiently arrive.

XX

How could a solid Cosmos be from nothing brought?
E'er has been Universe! 'Tis sure a likelier thought
Than that a-sudden rose a most stupendous world,
Out of void absolute, from emptiness, forth-hurled!
Dwells a Creator who, possessed of human traits,
Successively His likeness, at man's birth, conveys?
Of might, past concept, reigns a wondrous King aloft,
As was by Hebrews held, and yet is stated oft?
Or stays, inscrutable, a Spirit everywhere,
That recks how planets speed through ceaseless-cloven air;
Still, loves not, pities not, despises not, nor hates,
The presence of small Earth but seldom contemplates;
Scarcely observes the path of weak and trifling man,
A thing of yesterday is an eternal span?
Natheless, in such a case, there might perchance, awhile,
Rise on that countenance august a fleeting smile
(Even within a whirling nebula afar
Or in a nearer richly jewelled glittering star)
Truly more beautiful than any golden glow
Or crimson hue irradiate from the alpine snow;
And due to wonderment that men, choice egotists,
Can more assured grow, the longer each exists,
Only for them is light!

Is God a friend on high
When, with a threat of war, opponents we defy;
Or potencies which aid to overcome a task;
A vague ideal within whose sunny beams we bask?
Or matter's energy, a strange inherent might
Nigh destined to be brought by prying ones to light?
Not a beginning but a sure continuance,
Vast laws that never cease and ever bring advance?
Or, title of a power beyond the dream of all,
The named embodiment of best in large and small,
A concept varying with epoch, folk and clime
In every land, the truest, wisest, most sublime!

Maybe theology, with centuries, will change,
Suffer remoulding, lest to many it seem strange,
Exhibit vanished puissance; yet surpassing hard
'Twill ever prove to say;—a dogma, lo, discard!

In the grim Middle Age mankind could ne'er avow
Thought valiant, or the learning seldom hidden now;
Magic was acquiesced in, cruelty oft rife,
Submission taught to toilers, children, ay and wife;
And far-noised miracles sustained a rigid creed,
While all the world was prone to love a fabled deed.

To-day, more educate, many would fain review
Their principles of faith in light of wisdom new:
They fear Hell's torture less, Heaven hope with 'minished force;
Straining to comprehend, employ each fresh resource,
Would sate insistent needs, without a pause prepare
Through measures practical to make the Earth more fair.

How long 'twas held, the truth but to a few was shown,
Who tireless sought to make the revelation known!

So, as the Christian martyrs pagan ire appeased,
The sight of heathens' blood the warlike Cortez pleased;
And bigot Torquemada grimly Spaniards burned,
The true oft stretched the rack, or direly thumb-screws turned!
If scarce the flame would now on Tyndale lone alight,
No horrid threat the daring Galileo fright,
Still followers of the Prophet can their rivals hate
And Christians on far Jews a fiendish ardour sate!
Thus, after long-drawn night, hours obdurate and sad,
Too slowly dawn arrives with zephyrs fresh and glad;
Tardy arrives the day when ruthless force shall end
And none, to crush the truth, will eager thinkers rend.
Yet some would expiate, erect a solemn mark,
Honour with statues those who lit dear freedom's spark!

XXI

'Midst direst years of famine and a foreign war,
Earthquake and persecution, pestilences sore,
Rude destiny relents, sends Italy the gift
Of brave Giordano Bruno that would her uplift.
In a famed cloister, nigh transcendent Naples' bay
Whose gorgeous splendours e'er the sensitive must sway;
Exalting knowledge o'er tradition's mystic rites,
Loving a Cosmic Father more than faith's delights,
Oft paced an earnest youth showing, as moments passed,
He scarce to fill a part Dominican was cast.

Threatened, he makes for Rome, escapes from hostile reach,
On the Riviera's coast would children grammar teach;
Dares quote Copernicus, allude to worlds afar,
Rouses such ire as can his mind from peace debar;
And visits soon Geneva, though no Calvinist,
Disputes and writes and flees at last when folk insist;
Till, finding he can well in mild Toulouse appear,
There lectures on the soul and Heaven's mighty Sphere.
Then, as excuse to show, spirit with matter breeds,
Awhile in Paris he for Aristotle pleads;
Says, Universal mind, of wondrous attributes,
Arranges naught is lost, often itself transmutes;
So he in Oxford proves, e'er soul and matter live,
Since atoms can to spirit a fresh body give.
Loves Bruno moral good; too, nourishes the hope
A phrensy pure shall find in intellect its scope;
Hates the dull critics who would make of poets slaves,
Lashes in comedies the hypocrites and knaves.
Severely he inclined to metaphysic thought,
Deemed, all things are from One through different numbers brought;
Ne'er guessed the learned, modern chemist would propound,
The atoms' secret is with special numbers bound!
Holding them useless for the truth's sore urgent needs,
This monk condemns accepted theologic creeds:
Cries, never man was more than in huge space a speck!
Awaits, at last receives from Holy Church a check,

Because his faith impairs the Fathers' Heavenly scheme,
Distresses minds of some must wake not from their dream!
To queenly Venice lured, upon an evil day,
By a disciple 'neath a mean inglorious sway,
Delivered was this hero of the things of mind
To such as hoped, the world would long continue blind,
Angrily heard him soon his fullest thought reveal
And led him to a dungeon wretchedness to feel.
Lingering through the years, then given to the stake,
Gazed Bruno steadfastly, with calmness, clearly spake:—
"Greater the fear, perchance, Judges, your mind disturbs
Than now affects my heart, its happy motion curbs!"
Barefoot, emaciate, from torture scarcely whole,
Slowly truth's champion dragged his frame of mighty soul;
Next, with dark gleaming eyes fair Heaven looked upon,
As cross-armed, he stood chained; while the Sun brightly shone
That oft was yet to be engirdled by small Earth,
Ere first his effigy proclaimed the martyr's worth.
Is love of truth not rare? Then it should raise on high,
Not bring them misery who boldly testify!
So may stern rulers pause, and thought-oppressors all
Lend them to nothing shall that dreadful deed recall!

XXII

At times, the anxious soul, on contemplation bent,
Sincerely questioning, gropes in bewilderment.

Was Earth evoked from naught, by such Omnipotence
As all directs with gentle, vast intelligence,
While yet sink cities searched by flood or earthquake, flame,
Whelming the good or base, erect and stricken, lame?
Many keep silence, but some, grave of mien, rehearse
How in a distant age began the Universe;
Then hint God's late obscured or cancelled kindliness!
Still, as accustomed pains, when they the weak oppress,
Can wake small wonderment, but an unusual woe
Or a gigantic loss, makes all mankind bestow
A thought on remedies; so, 'midst disasters new,
Men ask to what dread force are fearful evils due,
(As quaking savages who cannot mischiefs ban,
Forget not featured vileness near at hand to scan)
Wherefore, though some, o'er all things, care divine have cast;
Others, as reverent, but find a mystery vast!
Says one, each present ill an old wrongdoing proves;
Another, man ne'er fell and ever upward moves:
And pious pastors, scorning logic o'er exact,
Welcoming metaphor, new rules of thought enact,
See in dilemmas but a stimulus to skill,
Can, with symbolic meanings, human needs fulfil,
Know that the sensitive dislike harsh truths to hear
And feast on dreams delicious, sweet emotions dear!
And thus, man's failure oft perfection to come nigh,
In trope, becomes a fall from a condition high;
While Nature, whence sprang all, appears a Father stern,
Omnipotent, resolved from sin his sons shall turn.

Next, who at mighty cóst, from evil ways redeems,
A pure divinity and gracious saviour seems;
While she that could for men such glorious puissance bear,
Must specially the gift of intercession share;
Too, priests acquire renown; performing magic rites,
Infuse a happiness for earthly woe requites.
So, man is helped laws Cosmic, strange, severe and grand
To comprehend in part; oft weaknesses withstand
By creeds which comfort both the prince and peasant rude,
Aid such as 'stablish a receptive attitude.
Alas! the miracles favoured of churchmen bear
But ill a searchlight, shun the o'er intrusive air;
Wherefore, as knowledge grows, theology declines,
Or to the credible a greater weight assigns.

XXIII

But science thrives though sunshine to its toil be brought,
Discussion loves, invites the question showing thought;
Doubts if the Cosmos was from naught create, released,
And knows no hour when cause and due effect have ceased;
Deems matter, force, amidst all forms which either wears,
Are ne'er annihilate, as sure research declares;
Says, to whatever aspect Earth and man shall tend,
The Universe, slow changing, ne'er will know an end!
Inherent traits of matter thus appear the cause
Of the life visible, which alters without pause;

For gleam such qualities in many atoms small
As might, in circumstances favourable, forth-call
Vital activity. New wondrous topics strange
Are bravely entering in man's familiar range!
And soon, as in an age of great Byzantium's past,
May rise a problem 'mongst folk pious, sad, aghast;—
How far was he divine in Galilee that sweet
Words gentle spake; or like to God? or God complete?
Still, as a thing of beauty in the memory lives,
Ever, surpassing faith its consolation gives;
As galaxies of stars survive the blackest night,
The thought of Heaven shall prove a glory and delight.
Scarce swift a creed upreared on witness distant, old,
Will suffer from assaults of thought however bold;
And tales of other gods, whom Virgins bore, not oft
Will pierce his fervid soul for comfort turns aloft;
Nor pagan narratives his mind shall exercise,
Even of saviours who from cruel death could rise.
Seldom the scholar's learning will disturb the heart
Of those who faith evince and welcome in each part
A story beautiful. For them, the chance is faint
That, round the memory of a poor tortured saint,
The virtuous could build, with prophets gone before,
The figure of a truer saviour to adore;
Wherein a spirit fine, like previous Christs', to see,
Essence and principle of a deep mystery;
A pure embodiment of gentle godlike might,
Proving eternally a source of mystic light:
But also, to the wounded, bringing fragrant balm,
On restless sufferers conferring joyous calm;

More, to mankind presenting, graciously a lord
On whom their gratitude, devotion, might be poured.
Though long 'twas perilous to show Rome's Church a slight,
Now, on a Gallic shore, but few her help invite:
Men raise a new ideal, a civic creed would rear,
Worship the good apart from Heavenly hope or fear;
Exalted by no vision of eternal bliss,
Let not their fancy quake at thought of Hell's abyss;
Contemn a ritual æsthetic and ornate,
Scorn esoteric signs and symbols intricate;
Question if Deity would sudden man reprieve,
For folk had sinned so long a late salvation weave.
And searched are holy books for any rift or flaw,
Probed is the creed of such as Heaven hold in awe;
Is doubted if the woes of One, however great,
The misdeeds of a sinner well could expiate;
Or that Omnipotence, becoming brave of plan,
Enshaped as those it made, their scene of strife would scan.
Too, disputants abandon former ways serene;
Upon researches bent, investigation keen,
Ne'er to themselves suggest;—thus far, no further go!
But, wonted to enquire, must labour, toil bestow.

XXIV

Clearly no golden age foreran such mythic fall
As, loved of reverent folk, can pastors sure enthral.
Long the tale primitive in Babylon had rung,
Ere in the Hebrew Book magnificently sung
With vivid instances of many a trait and deed
True to life barbarous; as, when had sprung a need

For epic narrative, poets achieved the task :
Greatly attempting, gave what some began to ask.
The virtuous and good, indeed, could soon aspire,
Bravely indulge in vast eternity's desire ;
E'en as ere Cheops' day, Egyptians dared to dream,
Must win from great Osiris endless life supreme !
But men, by ancient Nile, with symbols fed their love
For the vitality of earth, sea, sky above ;
And kept a just ideal e'er generous in view
When they, in cultured Athens, rites ecstatic knew.
So moderns now demand that health and welfare wide,
A purer happiness, shall soon on Earth abide ;
Less anxious for a glimpse of Heaven's far-off strand,
Choose a course manifest, exploring close at hand,
Nearer seek paradise, and hither oft direct
With zeal their arduous thought ; little elsewhere expect.

XXV

Some deem, though creeds dissolve, yet always will remain
An awe of Nature, love of man ; which mighty twain,
At an approaching moment, maybe shall unite
Religion's reverence with knowledge, beauty, right ;
Nay, some maintain, a cult of all things that are great
Allied with high endeavour doth a Church await.
Still, oft the noble-souled, unsated with their past,
Deep stirred by mystic faith, wish to endure and last

Not merely as an oak, whose acorn thrives again,
If nourished, offers shelter! after gracious rain,
New glistens in the Sun; ne'er goads its like, nor slays;
A smaller part than man's yet never ruthless, plays.
Unsure of future life, some pace distraught the earth
And disappointed moan:—nothing is left of worth!
E'en spurn a genial Nature that, with outspread arms,
Imparts her wondrous secrets, aids, caresses, charms
Such as are dutiful; ay, with strange life could dower
Man through transcendent laws o'erwhelming in their power.
Ah, mighty, past all thought, is she that sternly rules,
Distributes chastisement to vicious folk and fools;
Despite her kindliness, is wonted to command,
Toward fortitude and toil points an imperious hand!
For, when to seed earth grows a foster mother true,
So that, on warmth's arrival, size and might ensue;
When sap revives a foliage free to boisterous air
And blossoms pass to fruit ere frosts their war declare;
When softly sink the clouds in crystal shapes enshrined,
Ever is manifest such range of Nature's mind
As, it would seem from modern searchings not in vain,
Depends on harmonies 'twixt atoms that obtain.
Nay, matter oft reveals, to those can deftly seek,
Qualities fine and traits which nigh of spirit speak:

As in the petalled glories waking ere 'tis noon,
At twilight slumberous, disposed through night to swoon.
And now the valiant venture, making brave surmise
Concerning flowers or grass-blades which in meadows rise,
To find 'twixt what has soul and things inanimate,
Innumerable forms rise intermediate;
For Nature with fresh life must gratify her pride,
Ambitious of display, is never satisfied;
To bring forth novel shapes will oft the old bewitch,
Zealous win victories in realms past measure rich;
Establishes anew her mighty potency,
Ever observes her laws, and yet loves liberty!

XXVI

With knowledge, new beliefs suited to shore and clime,
And fearless modes of thought will mould them to the time:
Excite democracies their birthright to extend,
Unto the common welfare ripe attention lend.
Thus in our day is felt, in truth, a vivid hope
The bold by effort strong shall persevering cope
With the impediments man's forward march delay,
As lethargy, or custom arrogant of sway.
While tireless needs and passions dominate the world
And, for his good or others', man 'gainst man is hurled;
While misery and want, squalor and vice remain
In alley foul and stifling court and narrow lane;
Although the zealous strive ever to mend the lot
Of the sad derelicts seeming by fate forgot,

Who weak or slothfully, sunk in a deep morass
Of ignorant despair, toward dissipation pass;
Or, knowing not, transmit an evil fate unearned
Unto their progeny (whose welfare ne'er were spurned
In a mood healthier) or, slave-like tame submit
To the unscrupulous, suffer by greed outwit;
'Tis clear, reform is called for, and it good portends,
Men know a nation's strength upon its sons depends!
Still, if such thought continue, mightily increase,
Rises but moderate hope and never chance of peace.
Scarcely can prescient sages certainly foretell
If coming years will progress or confusion spell;
And, as now gleams a calm and now tempestuous sea,
In the alembic of the future, there must free
Mingle nobility, love, hate and bias, scorn;
Knowledge at times will creep by prejudice o'erborne;
While, among nations showing rivalry severe,
This one or that its head shall o'er the feebler rear.
Ever, with error frequent, men will woo success,
And each within his heart to failure oft confess;
And yet though forced to strive, and fortunate in toil,
From strenuous endeavour man will not recoil.
And he has strength to rise, as they who wish can read,
For, halting now and then, evincing little speed,
Far onward he has moved. Wherefore, with confidence,
Soundly relying on late-stirred intelligence,
He views the years to come; this proudly ponders o'er,
That his desire for progress alway seems the more.

XXVII

As a brave flower is wont to show in beauty, pride,
Even if situate upon a mountain side;

Or, springing from dull earth, a stalwart tree can aim
Through bleakest air ambitious longings to proclaim;
So, surely high emotion e'er has power to breed
Intensity of thought, or act, the mighty deed.
The mediæval saints, pining for mystic light,
Near Christ would find themselves, with God the great unite,
In agonies of solemn contemplation thrown,
Fasted and rested, stirred not, in a cell alone;
Feeling unworthiness, their vileness oft avowed,
Then passed to blissful praise of Heaven's grandeur proud.
Impelled to dreaminess, intent on things above
Man's doings upon Earth, flourishes mystic love;
Of a warmth passionate and jealous nature tense,
Affords the sweetest comfort, joy past words, immense,
Seeming a treasury of privileged hid power,
Holy and cherished, real, assured from hour to hour!
Alas! but an excess of introspective thought,
Or rude austerities often the victory bought,
Forcing on souls o'er wistful an unnatural strength
E'en with the Infinite to mingle, and at length
Gain through endeavours to subdue the human mood,
Acquire a spiritual peace, consume a heavenly food!
But devotees live yet for ecstasy and trance,
And mystics, East and West, reward the searcher's glance;
Still, differently now some would sate extreme desire,
Ridding the world of evils, strike 'gainst mischiefs dire!

XXVIII

So came it Cosmic Force, supreme, eternal, vast,
Earthward a hero sent who mystics all surpassed,
One rich in attributes of body, soul and mind,
E'er passionate to heal the suffering of mankind;
For, if within his ken any event arose
Suggesting dominance, self-sacrifice, e'en blows,
Charles Gordon shrank not back; whatever evil drear
Might threat by day or night his enterprise severe.
See then a youth who bold in war, a bomb must seize,
Far throw it, and thus set imperilled friends at ease!
A captain that unarmed, as leader marching, joyed,
And China's fiercest rebels valiantly destroyed,
Aimed with untiring genius victories to plan,
Completed swiftly what large-hearted he began.
Awhile engaged upon his native land's defence,
And toil should stir her foes to future diffidence,
He lives penuriously, and succours those who faint,
Grows with the misery of many well acquaint;
Zealous in rescue of the halt and blind and weak,
Cares for boy-waifs, such teaches in a spirit meek;
Nor fails to study close the wondrous Hebrew tome
Which tells how men, of old, 'twixt right and wrong could roam.
Maintaining a broad faith, and liking every creed
Designed effectively to sate a daily need;
Gordon, for spoil and lucre, ever showed disdain,
But Heaven wished to please with a great deed humane,
So, winning an occasion for this settled hope,
Befired his energies, with a huge task could cope.

Controlled in mighty Cairo, famous for the wealth
Long dragged from fellahin by cruelty and stealth;
Ruled from that ancient city of bazaars and kiosks,
Palaces, sunny squares and stately gorgeous mosques;
Where high aloft the muezzin's solemn wailing voice
To prayer the faithful calls in Allah to rejoice;
And gather races swart and woman passes veiled,
And still the infidel is bitterly assailed;
Where all are debted to the glorious desert air
And the stream bountiful which makes the Delta fair;
A province lately got, to vile oppression thrown,
Had loudly cried for succour from the tropic zone.
Wherefore, by Abyssinia's mountain gorges steep,
And o'er broad rolling plains which seldom waters keep,
Brave Gordon sped, scarce saw Khartoum; must hasten fast,
Transfer slave-raiding vile to horrors of the past!
And arduous grows his task who, in great forests dense,
Estranged from knowledge of the sun's magnificence,
Must crawl past tangled creepers, giant prostrate trees,
Elephant-herds' huge footholes causing little seas;
Happy escape the thrust of a wild native's spear,
Tented recall, at dusk, outworn the day's career.
Behold, ere long, this active governor has made
At intervals a station, raised a stout stockade,
A letter-post from Cairo to the Lake installed,
Dragged far a steamship, launched her, negroes much appalled;
To efforts rigorous his men full reconciled,
Trust in himself implanted by a treatment mild;

Yet e'er shown furious anger toward each hunter harsh
Of trembling human forms by river, glade or marsh.
So, amid scenes of woe which his heart lacerate,
Strives he unceasingly, would slavery abate,
But sees his comrades die; at hours of dire distress,
Asks whether God will crown his struggles with success!
Still, when a foe departs that oft could thwart, befool,
Surely this zealot rases from Khartoum misrule.
Forthwith are broke the whips and cruel tax-bôoks burned,
While each that counsel seeks can gain it though unearned.
And justice was the sword of him that daring went,
Lone, or but scant escorted, might to represent;
Who, lingering scarce a moment, on a camel swift
Hurried the ghastly curse from Kordofan to lift,
Past tamarisk, acacia, solitary wells,
Oases where with herds many a nomad dwells.
Comes he to Darfour, proves his restless vigour wise,
Since the vile slaver chieftains, victims of surprise,
To his strong will submit. How flame his feelings, mount,
Who scarce the gleaming skulls beside the road can count,
Ever wins gratitude because he dares oppose,
Valour sublime displays, exhaustless purpose shows;
E'en lastly carries on a bloody contest stern,
Then leaves a peaceful land, homeward for health would turn.
Albeit, a legate sent to bring a wished-for peace,
He braves of Abyssinia's monarch the caprice;

Calm hears, at Gondar, words that threaten instant death,
An end the captive mocks at, urges with loud breath!
And yet he 'scapes; in distant lands, now South, now East,
Bestows his puissant aid where harmony has ceased;
Never forgets the years of duty to recall
When he from miscreant Arabs saved the timid thrall.
Lacking not honours, Gordon still gives sway to grief
That he no more secures for Africa relief;
So, when his country seeks e'en Nile-land to control,
Wotting of danger real, he must himself enrol
A saviour of the lost; as emissary hence,
Sent is to rescue from upheaval's consequence
Great southern garrisons, Cairo-wards to be brought,
Or a false prophet's vengeance, swiftly, ruthless taught.
In far Khartoum arrived, 'midst cries of welcome warm,
The hero many helps ere has advanced the storm;
E'er, statesmanlike, retains a special course in view,
Faced by a dread disaster, would the best pursue;
Is not allowed by powers a chief's sure aid to use,
Whom 'spite erst actions vile, he in sharp stress would choose.
So, staunch and nigh alone, he can his past transcend,
Cries, succour will arrive, no-way sad woes impend!
Entreats yet English aid, which, if it come but soon,
Though it be moderate, should prove sufficient boon.
Ah, he that steadfast hopes imminent ills to charm,
In a barbaric den, all would protect from harm,

Must learn superiors think he should forthwith escape,
Attempt no headstrong deeds, fear risks of complex shape.
But, since for sustenance of humble folk in debt,
Among the trustful, he could honour not forget.
Odious seemed the notion that himself should flee,
Invite a wretched throng to scoff at chivalry!
He deemed his nation must the huge Soudan regain,
Nor let it lie beneath a Mahdi's savage bane
Who, with fanatic ways and cruelty imbued,
Dark horrors would inflict, a sway anarchic, crude.
Erecting a high tower and watching through the night,
How, with emotions thrilled, shows Gordon now his might!
Allows him into slumber never to be drawn
But as the day succeeds the glory of the dawn!
Dreads he not outer hordes that hunger for his life,
Resistance yet inspires; guards against perils rife,
This captain of a city long and sore beset,
Who knows he cannot drive his force the foe to threat,
Dares mete out punishment, even relentless, dire
To such as in the field through cowardice, retire;
Yet, by his noble look and courage that ne'er quails,
To all around gives heart.
Alas! a doubt assails
The minds of some near by, who Allah reverence,
Whether brave rescuers, that, with much diligence
And being infidels, in numbers now draw nigh,
Should the besieging prophet at the last defy;
And one opes wide the gate!
'Tis scarce the hour of day,
And he of lonely vigil, comes forth to the way,

Serenely learns of foes arrived within the walls,
Sighs for the folk he loves, never himself, and falls!
Then all Earth groaned because swift rescuers sought, in vain,
The struggler that had lived and died for others' gain!
An ardent being strange, hardy and small and spare,
Rich in humanity which urged him oft to dare;
With pale eyes capable of a calm gaze intense,
Unmoved by evil sign or threat of violence;
Orbs shining with such light, that the beholder felt,
They like his voice, at times, with tenderness might melt!
Thus confident, sagacious, passionate since his youth,
Ruthless, if need and justice deprecated ruth,
One could arouse the faithful, the rebellious tame,
Though saint and mystic, won a man of action's fame.

XXIX

How from such effort true, gleam widely different
The deeds of many a one a spur to progress lent,
Wishing his fellows all to taste rewards of Earth,
Planned perseveringly, grew anxious for the birth
Of shrewd contrivances shall help a course assured,
By the desire of comfort, welfare, speed allured!
While puissance, anciently, belonged but to the prince,
Each subject now his force o'er Nature can evince,
Triumph repeatedly, for man new prizes wins
As e'en this last of twice ten centuries begins;
Bravely reveals himself capable of a reign
Such as no Cæsar guessed e'er mortal would obtain!
If he choose intercourse, through late inventors' skill
He lists to far-off friends, can speak with them at will;

Lacking the use perchance of mediatory wire,
Yet speeds his message, may in other lands enquire;
O'ercoming hindrances of ether, distance vast,
Confesses him no more at old restraints aghast;
For prescient Hertz perceived he could communicate
By help of tiny waves subtle and swift of rate;
While soon Marconi, with a method nigh supreme,
Must, energy displaying, oft successful scheme.
If one a marvel ask within the scope of all,
Loving the tones of those long absent to recall,
He may, commanding, hear their qualities of voice,
Or summon, at his will, melodies clear and choice,
Because against the word Impossible, must move
A valiant Edison, ever invent, improve!
Nor idle have been men since eagerly Daguerre
Made an astonished world of a hid force aware!
They can the features note, using a faithful lens,
E'en of a quickly stirring throng of citizens,
Can every motion seize and scarce in effort err,
Through chemistry's resource potently register,
Unto a screen convey, the courser galloping
Or catch the impulse of a swallow on the wing;
Forth call soft images, a sudden changing hue,
E'en of the tropic jungle secrets bring to view!
Great days are these of ours when throbbing engines aid
E'er restless thousands on wide Ocean to parade;
And architects sure span arms of the mighty sea,
Leave unto angry waves a lessened sovereignty;
Or, like a swarm of ants remodelling a shore,
Resistless in their will, men on an isthmus pour,
And all devoid of fear, send argosies betwixt
Where Nature ways Atlantic and Pacific fixt!

Timidity departs! even harsh seas beneath,
The warlike sink, and drive within their steely sheath;
While some, at wondrous speed, air's virgin regions scour,
Resolute, and unawed, e'er loftier would tower.

XXX

Forlorn are moments lacking such a meed of strife
As fans the listless soul and quickens a dull life,
Welcomes the pains of ardour, reaps a generous joy
Subtle and constant, from an interest cannot cloy.
Contriving, in fair France, when hapless Louis reigned,
Montgolfier, a shrewd merchant, strange successes gained;
Athirst to emulate the freedom of each cloud,
Fleecy and buoyant, or inert and dark of shroud,
Bethought him zealously air heated to enclose,
Whereon a spheric ship into far distance rose.
And since dumb animals therein came safe ashore,
Next, man grew confident he, too, could upward soar;
Forsook his wonted paths, down gazed on spinning Earth,
Despised the ancient chains had hung on him since birth,
So dared that phantasies of gorgeous Eastern tale
And mediæval legend by his triumph pale.
Floated de Rozier thus dreamily in the breeze,
Weirdly and lone withdrew, effortless and at ease,
Scornful, no doubt, of all were loth aloft to bound,
As spiritless and craven, tethered to the ground.
Deeming the cult of air rapturous and sublime,
Move forth adventurers unfailing from such time;

Conquer each lurking fear, up mount and win applause
As some who further bravely noble science' cause,
Piercing the empyrean, search for knowledge new;
Till warn death's harbingers: blasts icily pursue!
Pining to navigate air's ocean as he wills,
Next, man his strenuous mind with various projects fills;
Ambitiously would waft his novel barque with oars,
Or 'neath it works with steam an engine, smoke forth pours;
So last, Tissandier bold, alert, of modern aim
And admirable endeavour, sudden springs to fame;
Must by a rudder steer an airship elongate,
Whose e'er revolving blade with life is animate
Under the rule insistent of electric force,
That ready puissant slave, fresh agent, rich resource!
Zealously giant-vessels dare high realms invade,
As huge tame monarch-eagles bold, of naught afraid;
Hovering, threaten cities armed not 'gainst such foes;
Or visit distant lands, arrive where they propose,
And unto hazard lured, let nothing daunt, appal,
Love wondrous undertakings, answer to their call!

XXXI

Long had man eager watched the straining captive kite,
Would emulate its traits, indulge in hopes of flight;
Toiled on despite disasters, sanguine, undismayed;
Till one with steadfast genius gave the world his aid.
'Twas in Ohio, youthful Wilbur Wright oft dreamed
Of imitated birds, in idle moments schemed
Air's insects to outpace through shrewd mechanic skill
And with a brother's help, from the high sandy hill

Of a propitious strand, last launched himself in space,
Glided 'neath double planes, showed saving speed and grace.
Surely Wright ways acquired his fragile craft to guide,
Ay, well resist, though gusts should boisterously chide;
Sufficient for his purpose, added motive force,
Exulting in his power, learned everywhere to course!
Whence the incredulous acknowledged him a king,
An aerial conqueror who far his way could wing,
Confessed, were rarely seen such attributes complete
As calmly he betrayed had thus o'ercome defeat.
With broad and level sails now readily embark
Airmen relying on the rapid tireless spark!
Count upon Nature's welcome, e'en at fearful speed,
Darting aloft, unlike young Icarus succeed;
Hither and thither rush, tilt, wheel, secure alight,
Astound the Universe and still advance in might,
Exert an influence shall surely never cease,
Foretell advantages supreme 'mongst arts of peace.
'Twould seem an era comes when, careless mounting high
Through unresisting air will gloriously fly
Swift squadrons, valiant fleets; where now an airship bold
Excessive plaudit wins, can close attention hold.
And yet shall Christian nations Heaven's light obscure,
Hazard of Armageddon in the sky endure?
Renew their lust for battle even in a place
That seems the holiest symbol of ideal grace?
Alas! to save one's country, what could honour more
Than, at all risk, among invaders fierce to soar!

XXXII

Among the numberless of strenuous intent
Who, in superior lands, make manifest their bent,
Rise other aspirants that eagerness avow,
Such as would e'en the throng with greater might endow;
So woman, once deprived of recognition just,
New freedom asks, herself to fuller sway can thrust.
And workers oft combine, insistent, without pause
Seek fresh advantages from economic laws,
Think, in an era of a sounder social faith,
Vanish should discontent nor leave behind its wraith.
But from poetic creeds in greater part recoil
Such as, for life's support, must grow inured to toil;
Nor haste, upon the day they live from labour free,
As worshippers to taste religion's mystery,
Gathered together scarcely lift the voice in praise,
But snatch a mild relief from irksome wonted ways.
And since on rest-days oft the unregenerate
In throes of idleness, have outlook desolate;
Some ask that ruling powers shall lessen prospects bleak,
Showing concern for all the ill-equipped and weak,
Quickly consider, act, intelligence instil,
Neglecting not occasions hungry minds to fill,
Bestir themselves at once sad evils to expose
And prove that follies cause deficiencies in those
Whom mothers yet must bear.
And such as thus entice
Earth's denizens to make Earth more a paradise,
Strive no-way 'gainst a Church blest with the vast resource
Of a symbolic faith, but choose a proper course,

To worthy undertakings would their vigour lend,
Turn to needs obvious, humanity befriend.
Wherefore begins a dream that varied excellence
Shall on the undevout assert its influence ;
Allow no potent means of welfare to escape,
As art in many a form of rich and subtle shape,
Or high soul-stirring strains and melody's soft use,
Even the mighty drama shorn of all abuse,
Ay, find throughout the realm of natural things entire
An aid for all a true sublimity admire.
Regard some joyously deservers of true fame,
And value them as means the virtues to proclaim ;
Endeavour in each heart to write a list renowned
Of those have shone forth able evils to confound,
The martyrs, patriots who fearful wrongs withstood,
The valiant that have suffered and revealed the good.
Oft the heroic act of peasant, citizen,
Passes unnoticed, stays beyond the general ken ;
But if, in struggles dire, the eminent succumb,
Then, for a little while, the people are struck dumb.

XXXIII

The triumphs bringing sadness move, oppressing all,
Permit not to forget ! So, from its snowy pall
In lone and awful wastes, a spirit that ills knew
Of fierce Antarctic ice-fields, shall its path pursue ;
Reaching to weaker natures striving upon Earth,
Hearten, admonish with a tale of valour's worth.
Consummate leader never daunted by the thought,
Dread woes might 'whelm the strong in storms appalling caught

Ere yet their toil was o'er; Scott, of the Southern Pole!
Zealous and skilful chief, of pure and simple soul,
Untiring in the cause of knowledge to be won,
Succeeded'st in high efforts crowned till late by none!
Alas! it was thy lot, through a hard destiny,
To lose a due world-praise, view of forms dear to thee;
But suffered'st ne'er that grief should duty, greatness mar,
Wast brave, with comrades few, close-pent, from succour far!
Ensample paramount of a courageous race!
Could'st peer, without a throe, in death's cold spectral face,
Stirring a folk to sorrow, sure renew their pride
That qualities transcendent in our race abide!

XXXIV

Who, in the cause of weakness, pledges his good word,
Breathes with the thought of pity, justice, honour stirred!
Shall force, or liberty, inspire the common weal,
Prussian, or Englishman, live true to his ideal?
Ever, from Milton's hour, have voices tolerant
Attempted, in our land, all harshness to supplant;
Then, proudly spurn the creed that who have wrongly striven
However vile their fault can readily be shriven:
New frightfulness should sway whereby a mighty State,
Through blood and iron's help, shall gleam inviolate,

Ay, that the great upon the small may savage leap,
Nought leave them, but sad eyes wherewith for ills to
weep!
Though, in a future age, a true endeavour high
Shall soften nations, cause a joy in equity;
With us the hurly-burly of contention stays,
Peoples o'er readily return to ancient ways.
Well therefore might men ask (considering the woe
Wrought by the endless battle modern fighters know)
While, in a sacred tome, lurk tales of early crime,
Should they not be adjudged uncalled for in our time;
Since a fanatic ruler, who in rapt conceit
Justifies all he does, wide bloodshed may repeat.
What more than hate disturbs, than such what more
doth bind
To struggles drear the great divisions of mankind?
Ah, hideous is the curse of rude ambitious will
Luring the bold a monstrous dogma to instil,
As that a neighbouring country has no right to pray
For mercy, should it stand in domination's way!
How wretched is the madness can afflict the
strong
Who, governing a State, for larger puissance long,
Cry, in their eagerness, treaties may be up-torn,
And who resist shall suffer till they sink outworn!
Victims of beckoning grandeur, how will not men
dare,
Be caught, if schemeful monarchs, in a bloody snare?
As showed a War-lord prone to wave his sword
on high,
Supporting Prussia's hoary martial chivalry.
Alas! the German, zealous for impressive thought,
O'er quickly to the cult of victory was brought

When sombre Clausewitz praised war unchecked, supreme,
Maintained the notion of a ruthlessness extreme;
And Nietzsche chaunted for the overman desire,
Long, eloquently Treitschke put forth effort dire:
Oh, fearful looms the doctrine that a people great
Opposed by weaker folk, may nigh exterminate!
Often appeals to Heaven the ruler of the land,
Reviewing countless warriors that in order stand;
While leaders strenuous without a pause exhort,
And subtily make ready to collect, transport;
While ever grows the roar in mighty factory-works
Dealing gigantic guns where future peril lurks;
Is built a mighty fleet, but waiting for the call
To menace England's power, set Teutons over all.
At length, the haughty Emperor, in the name of God,
Against his brother-sovereigns threats to lift the rod,
Save little Serbia 'fore Austria bend low,
And kindly Muscovy remonstrances forego;
What time, the dual monarch, having lost his heir,
For vengeance on a troublous neighbour can prepare,
Slavs, whose ambition new makes havoc of his aims
And many a German soul with jealousy inflames.
High o'er blue Danube's wave are hurled with hideous screech,
Forthwith horrific shells, a wholesome fear to teach;
But Belgrade trembles not before the deadly hate
Of those are destined to be shrewdly castigate.
Quickly the Kaiser calls, against the Czar, rude war,
Frowns at the thought of peace, enchanted seems the more
Since, as allies the French to Russians being bound,
He may to Paris hasten (over neutral ground)

Deeming his armies a land guiltless, e'en, should
tread,
And Belgians, if stiff necked, beneath the yoke be led.
Then, as the Hapsburg wailed the vigour of his foe,
Even the Hohenzollern knew initial woe;
Who willed his legions on industrious Liège to fling,
Learned waspishly that bees foully attacked can sting;
Good Flemish! valiant warriors! till the end of time,
You shall live famous, for you dared oppose a crime!

XXXV

Swift as the din of tempest in far tropic seas,
Came, for our land, a call its soul of wrath to ease!
For Britain could not bear to break her plighted word,
Dreamed of the battlefield, by pity, honour stirred.
Cheering, her Senate wills to face the armies vast
Of the well drilled obedient to a feudal caste:
And thus her Navy keeps unending watch and ward,
Knows, she to risk no deadly peril can afford.
While peer the vigilant from Deal to Pentland Firth,
Great cruisers ride the wave from Skager Rack to Perth,
Maintain a guard o'er Elbe's broad pregnant estuary,
Each harbour whence a foe can issue privily.
E'er anxious is the vigil in the shifting haze,
The lookout through dark hours of earnest shortening
days;
Hazard of mines is met, that have been reckless strewn,
Of craft which under water deal death fierce and soon.
Our seamen, staunch remaining, well patrol the deep,
Cool if disaster come, yet at their stations keep
With brave hearts steadfast that no mishap doth
affright,
Aware that England knows their struggle for the right:

Ay, trembling not if new unheard-of woe befall,
They stand by, would save comrades, let no risk appal;
Unflinching, calmly make huge squadrons of the foe
Impotent to direct at Britain any blow.

XXXVI

But Teutons, grown infuriate, for is checked their speed,
Prove that a modern land its warlike Goths can breed
Who, if a folk gainsays endless exactions dire,
Destroy it with the sword; town, village raze with fire.
Termonde! sacked Aerschot! Louvain! nought your ills could heal,
Learning with anguish that your conqueror's ideal
Was military grandeur ruthless against those
Who dared heroical, with little strength, oppose.
Stirred by a frenzied wish to conquer neighbours weak,
Daunt a resistive people, cruel vengeance wreak;
At once the dreadful legions levy monstrous toll,
Threaten and ever rouse a torment in the soul
Of many vilely taught in fear to draw a breath,
Or horror-stricken flee foul insult, lust or death;
May-be, forlorn and dazed, a feeble friend forsake,
For preservation, life of dearest kindred, quake,
Or, only able of new wretchedness to think,
At last upon the highway, spent, despairing, sink.
Then armies, e'en through Brussels, hastening to the South,
Deem Paris were a morsel ready to the mouth;
But whirring air-planes signal, active Uhlans bring,
Word that audacious Britons into notice spring;

Cries hence the War-lord ;—swiftly, all annihilate,
Ay, let them truly know the measure of my hate !

XXXVII

Now to deeds glorious our Island soldiers move,
Eager, though far from home, their skill and worth to prove,
With heart aglow and active sinews, forward toil,
Resolved the Teuton shall from honest might recoil ;
Until, along a front at Mons they fall in place,
Ready to battle for the honour of their race.
Where many a valiant troop since Cæsar's hour had fought,
Now Albion's sons would show they care for danger nought :
English and Irish, Scotch, with witty sallies cool
Entrenching, can desire scarce better than to school
The foe in manliness : well placed upon a slope
Prepare behind a stream with future stress to cope.
Chafing, they linger, since now batteries from afar
Aim to fulfil a task remorseless, regular,
Hurling from hidden guns such missiles as loud shriek,
Or, with a deafening boom, a mightier anger wreak.
Then, North directing, after noon, a steady glance,
They view massed companies from out the woods advance
Of those who quickly fill each gap wherever left,
Move held by discipline, of comrades being bereft ;
E'en if awhile they waver and next backward turn,
Are aided of fresh numbers breathing unconcern.
Thus, with the hurrying hours, the conflict grows apace,
Lessens 'twixt friend and foe the intervening space ;

Shattered and decimate, again the Germans form,
E'er reached by the deadly fire, despise the awful storm.
Cool, as if practising, the British warriors fight
Through the long moments of that August sabbath bright,
Level a steady aim, and unremitting hark
To leaders warning oft that each his man should mark.
Ah, their Commander true but suddenly has known
To stem an overwhelming tide he stands alone,
Nor his small army's courage and unerring skill
Can break a slaughterous, man-sacrificing will;
Whence, at the evening hour, near and afar he scans
The Teuton multitude and moulds anew his plans,
Directs that, here, the troops obey but conflict's law,
While others, ere the morrow, hurriedly withdraw.
So, deftly some fall back 'neath cover of the night,
While comrades on the East, undaunted in their might,
At morn oppose the Germans, who to span the stream
Move forward with pontoons; continually scheme,
Late, in a serried phalanx, caring not for loss,
Persist and fail no more, even the river cross.
Never allow the Briton hell of din and smoke,
Shell, Shrapnel, Mitrailleuse, their gallantry to cloak;
But meet the awful onset with an enfilade;
Horsed or afoot, win ground through charges reckless made,
Enduring suffer, face a nigh o'erwhelming fire,
Then, orderly obey the signal to retire.
'Twas so they bore them giving battle on the right,
Until the Left resumed its portion in the fight:
Both fought and marched, manœuvred, showing wondrous powers,
Hardly a moment rested, through eternal hours;

But, with a tireless ardour for the good of all,
As came each day and night, made answer to the call,
Unflinching, resolute, e'er balked the onslaught fierce
Of those who would with numbers, swift outflank or pierce.
How valour filled the soul, when destiny could ask
The spent to prove retreat a not o'ertaxing task,
Conquer the enemy on Cambrai's bloody field,
Le Cateau reach and further; never think to yield!
Wherefore the Teutons, though they spare themselves no whit,
And alway seem forearmed, for every effort fit,
(E'en to the capital quick footsteps bold extend)
Are foiled by help the British unto Frenchmen lend:
Display them impotent, despite their giant stroke,
Despair in Gallic hearts, the worst dread, to evoke.

XXXVIII

Now, in a modern war, a captain, to succeed,
Makes an attack out-flanking, that should famine breed,
Or drives a wedge shall cleave the mass before him lies:
Would speedily advance, ambitious to surprise.
But soon the general, who nigh to Paris drave
Until the timidest his coming could not brave;
Recoiling from his venture, weaving a fresh scheme,
Moved South and East; and no-way showed himself supreme.
Meaning to push, from Meaux, enemies unto Seine,
He finds him swiftly driven over Marne again,
To suffer duly the sharp anguish of defeat
At hands of such as joyful harass his retreat.

Thereon the fleeing Germans seldom missiles hurl,
Hurrying headlong fall, topple where waters swirl,
Or viewing floods unbridged, surrender willingly,
Glad from extermination's peril to be free.
Still little groups well-weaponed, weary, hungry stray,
Hear feathered innocents trilling their roundelay;
Or, furtively afoot, a fugitive forlorn
Shunning each open field that lately teemed with corn,
Haunts a dark wood or thicket, dares at night forth-steal,
Cull with avidity from roots a scanty meal.
Now, influenced by hope of winning dead men's wealth,
Unrighteously marauders glean with lurid stealth;
Or, where the brave have fallen, moves a gentle nun
That, thinking only how new goodness shall be done,
Hurries to help poor sufferers and their wounds upbind,
Relieve the stricken whom field surgeons could not find,
Even while yet, at hand, the bugle call is made,
Or distantly resounds a sullen cannonade.

XXXIX

How strangely in dark war, when valour would fulfil
The cruel edicts of imperfect human will,
Love shall gleam paramount, a trait of kindliness
Unite the foes were late disjoined by hideous stress!
Thus haps it, in the hurried turmoil of retreat,
Amid the noonday glare of early Autumn heat,
Where, in a forest, cross-roads yield an open space,
Uhlans and Chasseurs met in terrible embrace:

And left a sign thereof, ere long by others found
Who, coming near, beheld forms on the trampled ground.
'Twas plain, two valiant soldiers, that had direly fought,
O'ercame all enmity, with noble effort wrought;
Proving, in minds afflict, hate's shackles may be riven
Even by them that well for victory have striven.
A sigh for la patrie! for Deutschland's plight a groan!
Learn Frenchman, Teuton so they lie not there alone;
Of whom the stronger, sideway pityingly turns
Troubled and glistening eyes, for fever in him burns;
In lieu of battle-pride, betrays but sympathy,
With haggard look, the will to lighten misery!
Himself is grievous wounded, yet the thought can nurse
Of aiding a near neighbour, may-be, stricken worse.
Haply, with kindly word and painful striving slow,
Able is he to crawl, and waiting, onward go,
Nor in his object fails, can finally arrest
The crimson stream up-welling from the other's breast,
Who, next in turn imposing on himself a task,
Gives, after travail, to the new-found friend his flask.
Clearly, at last two souls denied the hideous creed
Setting in motion millions 'neath a warring lead;
Revealed by attitude humane, to those should come,
Ideals affecting both, before in death made dumb.

XL

Amenable to fear and human nature prove
Now the aggressor troops, being beaten, backward move;
Unwilling any more dear lives to sacrifice,
Quickly retreat, relinquish guns as safety's price;

Are driven by the British shrewdly to the North,
While, from the West, brave Frenchmen putting effort forth,
Add new discomfiture. Behold! along the line
From Paris unto Verdun, as of set design,
Is shown by vigour rude, inspiring all alike,
At last, in Gaul's defence, the hour has come to strike.
Where thickly wooded heights look down upon a stream,
Can valiant warriors and skilful, crafty scheme.
Must hardy Germans flee no more without a pause!
Rather, on Aisne endeavour, making good their cause,
To drive defenders back and vigorous pursue,
Ay, put the Islanders unto the test anew.
Full many a noble act and doughty feat of war
Might dwell in memory, embalmed for evermore;
For tirelessly the brave thronging that hardest school,
Avid to do their best, heroic shine and cool.
Where, at the stream of Aisne, beyond lay Teuton power,
And, Southerly, allies awaited a rough hour,
There British Engineers illustrious honour won,
Noting, in face of death, but duty to be done!
A bridge should be destroyed; time pressed: now who would dare
To be, in a great deed, the first to claim a share?
Forth came a stalwart, who the peril knew, defied,
On bore the powder with a firm and rapid stride.
And, when he fell, another quick to follow leapt,
Down sank upon a spot by many a bullet swept
And shell sore visited. Amid which ghastly hail,
Arrived a third, a fourth, but e'er without avail:

Assured seemed failure's law, until at length in haste
A hero, 'neath the bridge, the cartridge deftly placed,
Alas ! became a victim, e'er he lit the fuse !
Would heartless destiny man's confidence abuse,
Never relent and smile on courage thus supreme?
Ah, no ! for comrades of the fallen likewise scheme,
And, from the first, the twelfth at last attains his end,
Dying to Soissons' tale must certain glory lend.

XLI

Along a hundred leagues, the hills and valleys past,
Now gleams the art of war, the net of hate is cast
By foes of France who fearful misery prepare,
Distribute bomb and shell 'mongst folk they will not spare,
Till weaklings young and old, soft infants free of blame,
Meshed are, though fugitive, upon a sea of flame.
How, with a deadly hold, the rival armies strive ;
Feint for a clear advantage, yet at none arrive ;
Exhausted rarely battle, then recover strength,
Maintain a sinuous form of e'er extending length !
For many a century, he that o'er France would reign
Has solemn knelt at Rheims, within a wondrous fane
Whose mighty towers reveal an ancient hope sublime,
And portal lines exhibit sculpture as in rhyme !
And such cathedral is to feel the blight of war,
Much as a hut might suffer, wretched, used no more ;
A hoary edifice, that oft has heard the voice
Of aspiration high, must now become the choice
Of ghouls that e'en the holiest things would desecrate,
Whose worst horrific bombs chance to annihilate
Their wounded countrymen, while tended by sweet nuns
Unawed 'midst ills, and havoc wrought by modern Huns.

Demons in hell! shriek gloating, come is now the hour!
Yet, angels, sing! For you in woe could prove your power!
Nor shall men always weep, the sport of destiny,
Mysterious Cosmic might's caprice, weird jugglery!
With equal force and will the combatants contend,
Alternately attack, and vigorous defend,
Without a mark of fear now an entrenchment storm,
If in confusion thrown, with bravery re-form;
On a vast battlefield, the wondering world amaze,
As fade successively interminable days.
But, if an airman bold his general's view enlarge,
Then cannon furious at trenches shall discharge
Where riflemen strive valiant, through exacting hours,
Eager to show for King and comrade such fine powers
As cede not during night, though shine the tell-tale moon
Or prying searchlights learn a secret over-soon.
Here, sabring horsemen, or foot bayoneting haste,
Perchance, grim silence falls on guns e'er skilful placed;
There a brave troop with hidden batteries would cope,
Marksmen or stand on heights, or within tunnels grope,
Because, by river Aisne, the battle grows a siege,
And tries endurance, proves the stalwart nature liege.
Unto this Armageddon direful yet was found
No certain limit, e'en all space appeared its ground:
Each army would, outflanking, make the other yield,
Animate by such thought, passed northerly afield;
Entered among new rivers; altering not in bent,
E'er adding to its numbers, seaward slowly went.

XLII

And, truly, past the shore, a breed of seamen reigned
Who the activity of Ocean-foes restrained:
Dreaming of strife should feed ambition to the full,
Pined for an hour of conflict dread and honorable.
Heading 'twixt Heligoland's stern island and the coast,
Steamed *Arethusa* and destroyers, a small host,
Who challenged *Köln* and *Mainz* and *Ariadne:* felt
Yet scorned the danger that in lesser puissance dwelt;
Ay, would have suffered vengeance (on that foggy morn)
Had not stupendous *Lion*, hurrying, o'erborne,
Triumphed through weight of metal, marksmanship and speed,
Traits that, upon the Sea, in warring best succeed.
And now the generous victors, ever moved to save,
Uplifted within boats spent Germans from the wave;
For seamen live ennobled, a pure feeling keep
Toward those are vanquished on the fickle awful deep.
Awhile, the folk of England, Ocean's sovereign, hear
Of conflict variable, lone struggles far and near:
A friend or enemy sent to eternal night
Through broadsides heavy or a fell torpedo's might;
Oh, a supreme disaster to a valiant crew
Worse lacerates than all, can heart and soul subdue!
But, 'twixt the combatants, o'er seaways of the World,
Wherever flags have fluttered, challenges are hurled;
Even thus hawk-like *Emden*, swooping on rich prey,
Ravages Indian waters until *Sydney*'s day.
And woe comes: *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, pass from human ken,
Thrilling, yet searing deeply, minds of Englishmen;

Who proudly learn of heroes dauntless at their post
Although on decks submerged, anigh to Chili's coast;
How they well laid their guns, to the sad end withstood
A stronger hostile force: died for our Country's good.
Ere long, where foaming billows rage nigh Falklands' shore,
The victors in such battle know a downfall sore:
Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, Leipsic, Nürnberg ne'er return,
Sink, 'fore a mightier squadron; Teutons' pity earn,
Who gloomily must read, how forts in China set
Succumb when Albion's troops and Nipon's more than threat.
Ere Admiralty shines, supreme in effort glows
Skilful to waft the ardent from plains arid, snows:
Brave lads of Canada, far Austral Isles, each true,
Great India's soldiers proud to help the Raj anew.
These, in the hour of need, scarce waiting for a call,
Let Britain's noble theme inspirit and enthral;
Delaying not, embark an angry foe to thwart,
On foreign soil arrive, and freedom's cause support.

XLIII

Alas! in conflict such as ne'er was waged before,
When at the battle front, millions smote millions more,
Hapsburg and Hohenzollern in their wrath would gaze
On fancied triumphs; sighed, with victories to amaze.
Then as the War-lord was by Frenchmen, Belgians foiled,
He proved him pitiless, took hostages, despoiled;

Or, carrying off poor youths to labour long and forced,
Ne'er recked of tears adown their mothers' faces coursed;
Even his airmen, o'er an unresisting town,
Hovered or flew, could hurl grievous destruction down,
Cast at their leisure bombs, though battle yet was far,
On women and frail babes launch instruments of war!
Arrived a hideous ill, a larger ruthless crime
Of troops whose ruler viewed in God a friend sublime;
Antwerp! thy wrongs have set a question past dispute:
Doubtful is no more man's weird kinship with the brute!
Town famous! brought to learn invasion's frightfulness,
Beleaguered long and driven into vile distress;
Whose wretched citizens must desperately dive
Within deep cellars, nor thus alway 'scape alive,
Or, in a body flee, unable to endure
Torment of fearful engines belching fumes impure;
While, at bombs' sudden impact, huge foundations shake,
And forth burst daunting flames as from a fiery lake;
Great city! thy despair roused the world's sympathy,
An object-lesson grew of war's indignity,
When the force-worshippers, at drear ambition's call,
Made the last stronghold of a little country fall!

XLIV

Now spake again the War-lord, Attila-inspired,
Even by hope of other hateful triumph fired;—
Onward to Calais, haste! your finest effort launch,
That Englishmen may strain their life's blood flow to staunch!

Wherefore, by sandy dunes, unnumbered Teutons pour
'Twixt a flat country poplar'd and a gradual shore,
Exalt self-sacrifice, stern-valoured discipline,
The traits shall certainly an Emperor's praises win.
But near the coast, on Ocean, gather some acute
To point far-reaching guns, and an advance dispute
Which would threat Albion! Her virile seamen ask
Nought better than a new annihilating task;
Calm, from their battleships, a dreadful onslaught shape,
Speeding across the wave, from all attack escape;
Discharging monstrous shells, induce a reign of fear,
Warn, on the narrow strand no more to persevere.
Poor German sons and soldiers! destined to fulfil
The haughty purpose of an absolutist will,
Full many of you wondered, horror-stricken, dumb,
Would ne'er an end to wanton mad destruction come!
Haply your leaders found their missiles, falling short,
Were ineffectual to deliver a retort;
So moved the combat southward unto Yser stream,
Which, day and night, beheld unending deeds supreme!
While strive the mighty hosts, spike-helmeted and grey,
The khaki line resists, the blue-red gives not way:
And if a step be won, a sudden vantage held,
'Tis likely that ere long, withdrawal is compelled.
Solaced at times by news of those are far, yet dear,
A little gift that lightens days and nights severe;
In trenches deep, 'midst havoc racking heart and nerves,
Fight on the heroes, fight! but long for such reserves
As shall uphold the worn, relieve the numbed and faint,
The brave and dutiful ne'er uttering complaint;

While if, from Nieuport unto Ypres, arises need
Of valour loftiest, then ever comes the deed!
A charge is o'er, and still, between near trenches lies
A stricken German that aloud in anguish cries.
Then leaps a Briton forth, aflame with purpose good,
To be by careful foes, at first, misunderstood;
Himself reels wounded, ere he lifts the other's form
And quickly bears it where, amidst of "hochs" a storm,
Is hung upon his breast the little iron cross,
Wide prized and coveted: a gain foretelling loss,
For, reaching comrades soon, e'en of his hurt he falls,
Through a fine death, the might of human love recalls.
Over a hundred leagues, the struggling armies sway
And a line tortuous the battlefields display,
As, blood soaked, they endeavour to allay a doubt
Which is the nation more in valour's cause devout.
Soon, at the call of winter, mist defers to frost,
And then, all learn of open dallying the cost;
Within long galleries, alert and deft of aim,
Whate'er the sky, perceive their daily round the same,
Zealously watch, or jest, eat, at the hour of sleep
But throw them down, near by, or find a shelter deep.
Yet to their loop-holed pathways, from each pit and cave,
All spring resistant, if attackers wondrous brave
Advancing from their lines, impetuously rush,
Would win a neighbouring trench, with deadly vigour crush.
Ever who bar the way, at Ypres the strife renew,
Contend with legions, grievous suffer, yet pursue

With steadfastness their mighty labour, fearful task,
Gain to their noble prayer, as answer, much they ask.
Long waiting such an hour as that of Neuve Chapelle,
When 'twould be given him, through plans deep laid and well,
To overwhelm with fire, then rushing forth strike hard,
Defy the Teutons his sure progress to retard;
Accepting destiny's direction how to fight,
The warrior now becomes awhile a troglodyte;
So, he can mount in air, a hawk or eagle fierce,
Or fish-like, 'neath the waters, darting sting or pierce.
But in whatever way the Briton shall contend,
Gleam honour, staunchness, valour, loyalty to friend;
With knightly motive, he the miserable would serve,
Nor from a warfare just, paths chivalrous, will swerve.

XLV

Viewing the dreadful spectre of wide ruthlessness,
He takes upon himself to make its empire less,
Would stem the savagery that loves a coward blow
Hurled grimly as at Scarborough; laying the weak low,
Cruelly brings to tragic culture an ill crown,
Confers on frightfulness fresh hideous renown.
For now the ghastly weapon of bombardment smites
Even unarmoured towns: the curse of Shell alights
Upon the tranquil, mild, who view at length in war
A monster ravening and shrieking at their door,
Raging for prey within, e'en babes, a helpless band,
And glutting horrid rancour with a bloody hand.
Should a haunt innocent be overwhelmed with woe,
And ne'er reprisal call up terror in the foe?
Forthwith the valiant seamen of Britannia vowed
Vengeance to take whereof minds lofty might be proud,

Determined to drive hard a conflict desperate,
Reveal them dauntless at a stronghold's very gate.
Flight captains and lieutenants given high to roam,
Measuring never hazard of the air or foam,
Embark in *Arethusa*, toward Cuxhaven speed,
While quick destroyers, helpful, stern and watchful lead.
Then, with the light of day, to carry out their plot,
Fly seven heroes and, past Heligoland's lone spot,
O'er-looking clearly spy huge cruisers lying still,
Idle, although equipped to do the War-lord's will.
Bravely the airmen circle, hurling missiles down,
Hint that the laggard fleet should seek at sea renown,
Whose hostile guns well pointed, warming to their task,
Urge on the winged invaders, not o'ermuch to ask.
'Ere long, when all advantage from their valour slips,
The Britons look again for shelter of their ships
That fear not Teuton monsters floating o'er the scene,
Nor others prodigal of venom submarine.
How wonderful a battle, proving human force,
Tameless ability, vast general resource!
Not but the Islanders who 'gan the conflict thrive,
As ever venturesome, can victory contrive;
Whereon, the noble seven, home returning each,
Speak modestly, describe the harbour they could reach.
Once more their wrath they show, unable to be dumb,
Who would against the mild with thundering cannon come!

Ah, now unhelped by chance, they fail to devastate,
Because defenders skilful sturdily await,
Offering open battle on the Northern sea,
New testimony give of Albion's majesty.

XLVI

At dawn off Dogger Bank, a lookout sights the foe,
Cheerily calling sends the goodly news below,
And, though the Germans, turning, a course homeward shape,
Our Admiral resolves they shall not thus escape.
We drive the engines hard, and diligent pursue,
Leave long dark clouds behind, as stares ahead each crew
Of mighty battleships, scouts and destroyers small,
Eager to conquer truly or in glory fall.
Lion, of sure renown, and *Tiger* following swift,
Princess, Indomitable, New Zealand, welcome gift,
A famous force we form *von Seydlitz* far to drive,
With *Moltke, Derflinger*, and *Blücher* angry strive.
Which last, a namesake huge of one that lived our friend,
Shall to the Teuton cause, through courage, honour lend;
For, searched by many a broadside of o'ertaking ships,
She well bears wretchedness when threatened with eclipse,
Of nothing thinks but duty, wages a fine fight,
Then heeling o'er, embraces darkness, as of night.
Yet, onward rushing, speed the consorts of the lost,
Aiming astern, while making haven at all cost;
Whereby, is *Lion* wounded, slackening her pace,
Lets *Tiger* gleam a leader foremost in the chase

Of such as, grievous harmed, and flaming on their decks,
At length protection reach where foes can no more vex.
Till hovering airships proved their enmity aloft,
We in our little boats were moved to pity soft;
But then, with rescued captives, into harbour sailed,
Telling a joyful land, mightily it prevailed.

XLVII

Assured their ethic for wide Empire were ideal,
Strangely a learned folk intolerance reveal;
Nay, to themselves a law, the Germans late have hurled,
A challenge terrible against well nigh the world,
Astonished neighbours by designs of changeless course,
Prevision, discipline, infinitude of force.
Yet, admirals in chief! how honour is brought low
When vile torpedoes to an *Aguila* send woe;
Or, 'whelming *Falaba*, a summons swift to die
Loudly proclaims, a foe can thought humane defy.
Clearly, distraught you err, craving the blood of each
In Albion's vessels! but your death-strokes ne'er shall teach
A fear of such as 'gainst unarmed men, women, war,
Decline the battle test by comrades prized ashore!
In secrecy to plan, and then a sudden spring,
Now on the French, now Russians, should advantage bring;
Thus, ever turned from where grim danger threatens least,
Legions are quickly hurried, as from West to East,
On a commander brave at Osterode fall,
For his temerity to dire accounting call.

Ah, but assemble warriors every fear above,
Devoted armies that the little Father love,
(Whether from Petrograd or Moscow, or the South,
Poltava, Novgorod, or sluggish Volga's mouth)
Harbour an only thought, as battleward they speed,
It were entrancing in the Tsar's defence to bleed!

To like cling ever like. Comes it, a virile race,
The Slavs, would close uniting win a higher place
Torn from antagonists laborious and severe,
Ready for commerce or a soldierly career,
Teutons who lean to knowledge, care and method, power,
Rigidity not found by mildness in its dower;
So, many a fortress frowned on Prussia's border long,
And glowered citadels that rendered Russia strong.

Betwixt the foes, lay forest, marsh and a huge plain
Where in fair settlement and town the Poles again
Could win prosperity, of vanished grandeur dream,
On Sobieski dwell or nearer glorious theme.

But when new rivalry had men of love deprived,
O'er Poland darkness, even dread eclipse arrived.
With how deep grief her sons must feel their heart-strings wrung,
Who now, as adversaries speaking a common tongue,
Alike in German ranks and Austrian, were found
Doomed to contend with kindred upon Russian ground!

And, in the mighty conflict, oft advance, retire,
Hosts larger than before have mingled blood with mire,
Troops that, averse from leaving comfort for the foe,
Mark with scorched villages the rising tide of woe.
Thus, as in primal nature, a desire to kill
Reigns upon either side; comes victory of will,

A plea to serve a Moloch constant in his hate,
And loving holocausts that leave his greed unsate.
Treasuring ordered strife as honour's very breath,
Winning advantage by obedience unto death,
Marching in phalanx, sure defences to attack,
Yet, despite loyalty, zeal, valour, driven back,
Crave Germans victory. Nor can the Russians pause,
Prompted to never ending effort in a cause
Transcendent and supreme. Whose armies journeying far,
The foe from paths to Poland's capital debar,
Galicia seize and o'er Carpathia's mountains roam,
Make Austrians despair, quake, tremble for their home.
And if disaster threatens, evil overtakes
Once more the hardy Russ anigh Mazuria's lakes;
Still, lightly falls the loss on one who can retreat
To nigh a wilderness, more easily there meet
And conquer enemies. Well may a river form
An obstacle that seldom is o'ercome by storm,
Although the War-lord's soldiers, twice ten deep, advance,
Turn not to right nor left, but only forward glance;
Would with an effort new retrieve the luckless last,
Prove limits of endeavour yet are to be past!
So gay lives Warsaw, proud, nor falls a prey to fear
If foes to cross the Rawka, Bzura, hurry near,
While Vistula well wots, at hand an army lies
Of brave Siberians, Cossacks, guards of giant size;
Is proud of him that, once a vodka-loving oaf,
Now as dear treasure guards a little holy loaf,
Tasting his tea and black bread, prodigal of toil
Prays his poor efforts by good chance may help to foil
Vile Prussian devilry. The Grand Duke understands

Deep arts of strategy, and hosts, at his commands,
Forth speed to action chaunting sweet and solemn hymns,
Shrink not from deathly hazard, woe of shattered limbs;
E'er zealous when the guns have told the battle plan,
Reveal, in conflict dread, the nature of the man:
Entrenching, give not way under the lash of Shell,
Then, in the hideous charge submission to compel,
Forgetting gentleness and passionate in war,
With mind awhirl, each thought but victory's ignore.
Now marching, great of stride, for little has he owed,
In war's assault to any networked iron road;
Now sieging patiently an ancient capital,
Winning Permysl's forts and famished legions all;
Now, as a sentinel amid the snowy pines,
Or, comrade-helped on wind-swept fields, e'er bravely shines
The soldier of the Tsar; eagerly, night or day,
Must, as a rite religious, calls of strife obey.
And it goes hard with them who, pondering, at length
Determine to compare with Muscovites their strength.
How drear may be men's fate whose dispositions fail,
When daring overbold grim Nature to assail;
Even where Caucasus, beneath a glistening shroud,
Desires to hold her grandeur solitary and proud!
For Moslems who revenge at Christians' cost would taste,
Repair toward Ardagan, to Sarykamysch haste;
In fight outwitted, yield, ere long compelled to fly,
Pent within narrow vales, on hill paths, frozen lie.

XLVIII

But, in a world-wide conflict, certain to astound,
Great happenings by greater frequently are crowned;
Thus, goodly ships, with *Queen Elizabeth* as chief,
Triumphant work of science, causing foemen grief,
O'ercome defences outer, inner, day by day,
From the Ægean glide along a narrow way;
While, nigh continually, enormous cannon roar,
Echoes reverberate from rocky shore to shore.
It is a fearsome risk where fortresses are placed
To challenge their renown, prodigious anger taste;
And, mined, must *Ocean*, *Irresistible* down sink,
Form with intrepid *Bouret* e'en in death a link;
Yet e'er the fleet, whose valour plaudits loud forthcalls,
Would threaten further till Constantinople falls!
Thus Orient's lustrous pearl, shining 'neath azure skies,
Long by good Christians deemed on Golden Horn a prize
(For oft, in Saint Sophia, mighty emperors prayed
Ere Allah-loving Sultans sought its holy shade)
Appeared elect of fate to grace a lofty cause
And callously no more give modern progress pause.
How weirdly past and present in the strife grow one,
New great deeds see the light where annals were begun!
Glitters a land, whose ancient splendours rich attract,
By stern Cambyses schooled and Buonaparte attacked,
'Twixt Asia, Africa, the Middle Sea and Red;
There, modern help revives prosperity long dead.
Hither to Egypt, which the cult of Ra has seen,
Hasten, o'er Desert ways, Turk, Teuton, wild Bedween,

By Beersheba advance, or paths through Sinai take,
Kantara's palms invade, even Serapeum make.
Come to a waterway uniting West and East,
Swiftly enough they learn success for them has ceased,
Are smit by Britons of the Empire, not a few,
Upholding progress won, protecting right anew.
So, hoary pyramids observe the gleaming tents
Of those have travelled far, to aid in vast events;
And, where Akhnaton-Pharaoh bowed to One above
That as an emblem shone of might, transcendent love,
A virile blow is struck for freedom, majesty,
Progress of heart and thought. Be this an augury!

XLIX

O monstrous tragedy and wretchedness supreme
Of hideous conflict marring every peaceful dream,
Often the consequence of man's unequal thought,
His nature manifold, ambition overwrought;
Forthwith thy horrid ill should prove the sharpest spur,
Inducing nations for high methods to bestir!
May never autocrat, who direfully would shape
Man's future destiny, due retribution 'scape!
So shall the devotees of might's unholy cult,
And tyranny of will, less readily exult;
While liberty its lesson into memory burns,
And effort from the path of sympathy ne'er turns!

L

Often imperilled fighters, lone, beyond appeal,
Find help in resolution as of tempered steel;
Or, dwelling on the plight of some worse circumstanced,
Discover, threatening arrows nigh aside have glanced.

Even if faith's support against each human woe
Alter its shape, the true may proudly valour show,
Continually aim those ancients to surpass
Who, sport of ruthless gods, unquailing could amass
Store of contempt for ills. Ever a new ideal,
And higher form of duty shall to men appeal;
Ay, and arrive in view a wider tolerance,
E'en where a doughty will is proven by the glance!
With later earnestness contributing relief,
Knowledge should smooth the path and tend to cure the grief.
Who closely look, conceive soft feelings grow more strong
Nigh as each pilgrim moves the thorny path along;
Imagine stoic faith by love is reinforced
And resignation's wisdom ever more endorsed.
As folk of Babylon or Memphis, even Tyre,
Scarce dreamed how Romans skilled should benefits acquire;
As sage Democritus ne'er entertained a thought
That to its present grandeur science could be brought;
No moderns, though sagacious, may with effort guess
How, later, woe shall 'minish, cede to happiness.
But arduous enterprise will doubtless speed to view
Gain and reward transcendent, if man oft pursue
A course that, minding well the warnings of the past,
Heeds and considers plans which human good forecast:
At least of predecessors then the Ages hence,
When glancing back, shall pause to speak with reverence.
Dread sovereign Nature! oft to man a loyal friend
'Tis your august decree, his labours ne'er shall end,

Whose heart and mind have yet a strenuous part to play
That knowledge, right, may flourish with benignant sway!
As he may yet descend, or climb to loftier heights,
So griefs undreamed await him, manifold delights;
But, in an era new, who should exhibit zeal
Would find much here is writ but vainly makes appeal;
For naught in human prospects clearly is so sure
As that the epochs fresh will other ways procure;
E'en may love's ecstasy be more delicious then,
Or gleam a relic of a past romantic ken;
While seeming steadfast customs curious shall loom,
Mere mention bring as marks of dim archaic gloom!
For ever shall wont yield, thought gain or lose in range,
But never Evolution lack a meed of change.
Now, mutual aid appears each day a truer law,
Correcting rivalry and strife's inherent flaw;
And oft gleam forms of goodness craving not to earn,
Yet, for the great of soul, ensuring a return.
Forthwith, can any shrewdly betterment foretell?
Ay, for now Science likes, weaving a magic spell,
Luminous beams to pour where all was dark as night;
Whose methods should reach far, influence and excite
Advance of every sort, on coming strugglers heap
Benefits unforeseen. Behooves it, men should keep
Their minds to questioning, continually agreed
That only thus can they to fuller rights succeed.
Vanquishing obstacles, and steadfast on his course,
Man must win mastery of matter, space and force;
Engender novel measures shall distribute balm,
Extend his happiness, sorrow alloy with calm!

And long ere fate command descendants of our race
In some awed Age a last catastrophe to face,
May rules sufficient teach a richer life to know,
Amelioration's spirit set the heart aglow !

No further daring on a valiant theme to dwell,
I to my undertaking bid a long farewell,
Stronger for memories of glances eager cast,
At man's procession in a strange, stupendous past !

A LAST WORD

As, touching on a spacious topic dear,
Athirst to cull from records of our kind
Joys subtilest, employ a restless mind
Avid for travel, if some willing hear;
As, aiming zealous glances, seldom near,
Thou hast a due to epic force assigned,
Amid the maze a little truth divined:
Must, loth to close, yet add a message clear?
But this! who now with humble valour, awe,
Would, by his verse, the worth of proofs enhance
That justify a dogma of ascent,
Predicts, a cult of wider ethic law,
A love, not only on one people spent,
Shall, linking nations, herald their advance.

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